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# The Torch-Bearers

VOL. II.

THE BOOK OF EARTH





# The Torch-Bearers

VOL. II.

THE BOOK OF EARTH

BY

ALFRED NOYES

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# The Torch-Bearers.

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## I.—THE BOOK OF EARTH.

### I.

#### THE GRAND CANYON.

LET the stars fade. Open the Book of  
Earth.

Out of the Painted Desert, in broad noon,  
Walking through pine-clad bluffs, in an  
air like wine,  
I came to the dreadful brink.

I saw, with a swimming brain, the solid  
earth

Splitting apart, into two hemispheres,  
Cleft, as though by the axe of an angry god.

On the brink of the Grand Canyon,  
Over that reeling gulf of amethyst shadows,  
From the edge of one sundered hemisphere

I looked down,  
Down from abyss to abyss,  
Into the dreadful heart of the old earth  
dreaming

Like a slaked furnace of her far beginnings,  
The inhuman ages, alien as the moon,  
Æons unborn, and the unimagined end.

There, on the terrible brink, against the sky,  
I saw a black speck on a boulder jutting  
Over a hundred forests that dropped and  
dropped

Down to a tangle of red precipitous gorges  
That dropped again and dropped, end-  
lessly down.

A mile away, or ten, on its jutting rock,  
The black speck moved. In that dry  
diamond light

It seemed so near me that my hand could  
touch it.

It stirred like a midge, cleaning its wings  
in the sun.

All measure was lost. It broke—into five  
black dots.

I looked, through the glass, and saw that  
these were men.

Beyond them, round them, under them,  
swam the abyss  
Endlessly on.

Far down, as a cloud sailed over,  
A sun-shaft struck, between forests and  
sandstone cliffs,

Down, endlessly down, to the naked and  
dusky granite,

Crystalline granite that still seemed to  
glow

With smouldering colours of those buried  
fires

Which formed it, long ago, in earth's deep  
womb.

And there, so far below that not a sound,  
Even in that desert air, rose from its bed,



I saw the thin green thread of the Colorado,  
The dragon of rivers, dwarfed to a vein of  
jade,

The Colorado that, out of the Rocky  
Mountains,

For fifteen hundred miles of glory and  
thunder,

Rolls to the broad Pacific.

From Flaming Gorge,  
Through the Grand Canyon with its  
monstrous chain

Of subject canyons, the green river flows,  
Linking them all together in one vast  
gulch,

But christening it, at each earth-cleaving  
turn,

With names like pictures, for six hundred  
miles :

*Black Canyon*, where it rushes in opal  
foam ;

*Red Canyon*, where it sleeks to jade again  
And slides through quartz, three thousand  
feet below ;

*Split-Mountain Canyon*, with its cotton-  
wood trees ;

And, opening out of this, *Whirlpool Ravine*,  
Where the wild rapids wash the gleaming  
walls

With rainbows, for nine miles of mist and  
fire ;

*Kingfisher Canyon*, gorgeous as the plumes  
Of its winged denizens, glistening with all  
hues ;

*Glen Canyon*, where the Cave of Music  
rang

Long since, with the discoverers' desert-  
song ;

*Vermilion Cliffs*, like sunset clouds con-  
gealed

To solid crags ; the *Valley of Surprise*,  
Where blind walls open, into a Titan pass ;  
*Labyrinth Canyon*, and the *Valley of*  
*Echoes* ;

*Cataract Canyon*, rolling boulders down  
In floods of emerald thunder ; *Gunnison's*  
*Valley*

Crossed, once, by the forgotten Spanish  
Trail ;  
Then, for a hundred miles, *Desolation*  
*Canyon*,  
Savagely pinnacled, strange as the lost  
road  
Of Death, cleaving a long-deserted world ;  
*Gray Canyon* next ; then *Marble Canyon*,  
stained  
With iron-rust above, but brightly veined  
As Parian, where the wave had sculptured  
it ;  
Then deep *Still-water*.

And all these conjunct  
In one huge chasm, were but the towering  
gates  
And dim approaches to the august abyss  
That opened here, — one sempiternal  
page  
Baring those awful hieroglyphs of stone,  
Seven systems, and seven ages, darkly  
scrolled  
In the deep Book of Earth.

Across the gulf  
I looked to that vast coast opposed, whose  
crests

Of raw rough amethyst, over the Canyon,  
flamed,

A league away, or ten. No eye could tell.  
All measure was lost. The tallest pine was  
a feather

Under my feet, in that ocean of violet  
gloom.

Then, with a dizzying brain, I saw below me,  
A little way out, a tiny shape, like a gnat  
Flying and spinning,—now like a gilded  
grain

Of dust in a shaft of light, now sharp and  
black

Over a blood-red sandstone precipice.

“ Look ! ”

The Indian guide thrust out a lean dark hand

That hid a hundred forests, and pointed to  
it,

Muttering low, " Big Eagle ! "

All that day,  
Riding along the brink, we found no end.  
Still, on the right, the pageant of the  
Abyss  
Unfolded. There gigantic walls of rock,  
Sheer as the world's end, seemed to float  
in air  
Over the hollow of space, and change their  
forms  
Like soft blue wood-smoke, with each  
change of light.  
Here massed red boulders, over the Angel  
Trail  
Darkened to thunder, or like a sunset  
burned.  
Here, while the mind reeled from the  
imagined plunge,  
Tall amethystine towers, dark Matterhorns,  
Rose out of shadowy nothingness to crown  
Their mighty heads with morning.  
Here, wild crags  
Black and abrupt, over the swimming  
dimness

Of coloured mist, and under the moving  
clouds,

Themselves appeared to move, stately  
and slow

As the moon moves, with an invisible pace,  
Or darkling planets quietly onward steal  
Through their immense dominion.

There, far down,  
A phantom sword, a search-beam of the  
sun,

Glanced upon purple pyramids, and set  
One facet aflame in each, the rest in  
gloom ;

While from their own deep chasms of  
shadow, that seemed

Small inch-wide rings of darkness round  
them, rose

Tabular foothills, mesas, hard and bright,  
Bevelled and flat, like gems ; or, softly  
bloomed

Like alabaster, stained with lucid wine ;  
Then slowly changed, under the changing  
clouds,

Where the light sharpened, into monstrous  
tombs  
Of trap-rock, hornblende, greenstone and  
basalt.

There,—under isles of pine, washed round  
with mist,  
Dark isles that seemed to sail through  
heaven, and cliffs  
That towered like Teneriffe,—far, far  
below,  
Striving to link those huge dissolving  
steeps,  
Gigantic causeways drowned or swam in  
vain,  
Column on column, arch on broken arch,  
Groping and winding, like the foundered  
spans  
Of lost Atlantis, under the weltering  
deep.  
For, over them, the abysmal tides of air,  
Inconstant as the colours of the sea,  
From amethyst into wreathing opal flowed,

Ebbed into rose through grey, then melted  
all

In universal amethyst again.

There, wild cathedrals, with light-splinter-  
ing spires,

Shone like a dream in the Eternal mind  
And changed as earth and sea and heaven  
must change.

Over them soared a promontory, black  
As night, but in the deepening gulf beyond,  
Far down in that vast hollow of violet air,  
Winding between the huge Plutonian walls,  
The semblance of a ruined city lay.

Dungeons flung wide, and palaces brought  
low,

Altars and temples, wrecked and over-  
thrown,

Gigantic stairs that climbed into the light  
And found no hope, and ended in the void :  
It burned and darkened, a city of  
porphyry,

Paved with obsidian, walled with ser-  
pentine,



Beautiful, desolate, stricken as by strange  
    gods

Who, long ago, from cloudy summits,  
    flung

Boulder on mountainous boulder of blood-  
    red marl

Into a gulf so deep that, when they fell,  
The soft wine-tinted mists closed over  
    them

Like ocean, and the Indian heard no sound.

## II.

## NIGHT AND THE ABYSS.

A LONELY cabin, like an eagle's nest,  
Lodged us that night upon the monstrous  
    brink,  
And roofed us from the burning desert  
    stars ;  
But, on my couch of hemlock as I lay,  
The Book of Earth still opened in my  
    dreams.  
Below me, only guessed by the slow  
    sound  
Of forests, through unfathomable gulfs  
Of midnight, vaster, more mysterious now,  
Breathed that invisible Presence of deep  
    awe.  
Through the wide open window, once, a  
    moth

Beat its dark wings, and flew—out—over  
that,

Brave little fluttering atheist, unaware  
Of aught beyond the reach of his antennæ,  
Thinking his light quick thoughts ; while,  
under him,  
God opened His immeasurable Abyss.

All night I heard the insistent whisper  
rise :

*One page of Earth's abysmal Book lies bare.  
Read—in its awful hieroglyphs of stone—  
His own deep scripture. Is its music sealed ?  
Or is the inscrutable secret growing clearer ?  
Then, like the night - wind, souging  
through the pines,*

Another voice replied, cold with despair :  
*It opens, and it opens. By what Power ?  
A silent river, hastening to the sea,  
Age after age, through crumbling desert rocks  
Clove the dread chasm. Wild snows that had  
their birth*

*In Ocean-mists, and folded their white wings*

*Among far mountains, fed that sharp-edged  
stream.*

*Ask Ocean whence it came. Ask Earth.  
Ask Heaven.*

*I see the manifold instruments as they move,  
Remote or near, with intricate inter-play ;  
But that which moves them, and determines all,  
Remains in darkness. Man must bow his  
head*

*Before the Inscrutable.*

*Then, far off, I heard,  
As from a deeper gulf, the antiphonal  
voice :*

*It opens, and it opens, and it opens,—  
The abyss of Heaven, the rock-leaved Book of  
Earth,*

*And that Abyss as dreadful and profound  
Locked in each atom.*

*Under the high stars,  
Man creeps, too infinitesimal to be scanned ;  
And, over all the worlds that dwindle away  
Beyond the uttermost microscopic sight,  
He towers—a god.*

*Midway, between the height  
That crushes, and the depth that flatters him,  
He stands within the little ring of light  
He calls his knowledge. Its horizon-line,  
The frontier of the dark, was narrow, once ;  
And he could bear it. But the light is  
growing ;  
The ring is widening ; and, with each  
increase,  
The frontiers of the night are widening, too.  
They grow and grow. The very blaze of truth  
That drives them back, enlarges the grim  
coasts  
Of utter darkness.*

*Man must bow his head  
Before the Inscrutable.*

*Then, from far within,  
The insistent whisper rose :*

*Man is himself  
The key to all he seeks.  
He is not exiled from this majesty,  
But is himself a part of it. To know  
Himself, and read this Book of Earth aright,*

*Flooding it as his ancient poets, once,  
Illumed old legends with their inborn fire,  
Were to discover music that out-soars  
His plodding thought, and all his fables, too ;  
A song of truth that deepens, not destroys  
The ethereal realm of wonder ; and still  
lures  
The spirit of man on more adventurous quests  
Into the wildest mystery of all,  
The miracle of reality, which he shares.*

But O, what art could guide me through  
that maze ?

What kingly shade unlock the music sealed  
In that dread volume ?

Sons of an earlier age,  
Poet and painter stretched no guiding  
hand.

Even the gaunt spirit, whom the Mantuan  
led  
Through the dark chasms and fiery clefts  
of pain,

Could set a bound to his own realms of  
    night,  
Enwall then round, build his own stairs  
    to heaven,  
And slept now, prisoned, in his own coiling  
    towers. . . .

Leonardo—found a shell among the hills,  
A sea-shell, turned to stone, as at the  
    gaze  
Of his own cold Medusa. His dark eyes,  
Hawk-swift to hunt the subtle lines of  
    law  
Through all the forms of beauty, on that  
    wild height  
Saw how the waves of a forgotten world  
Had washed and sculptured every soaring  
    crag,  
Ere Italy was born. He stood alone,—  
His rose-red cloak out-rippling on the  
    breeze,—  
A wondering sun - god. Through the  
    mountain-peaks,

The rumour of a phantom ocean rolled.  
It tossed a flying rainbow at his feet  
And vanished. . . .

Milton—walked in Paradise.  
He saw the golden compasses of God  
Turning through darkness to create the  
world.

He saw the creatures of a thousand æons  
Rise, in six days, out of the mire and clay,  
Pawing for freedom. With the great blind  
power

Of his own song, he riveted one more clasp,  
Though wrought of fabulous gold, on that  
dark Book,  
Not to be loosed for centuries.

Nearer yet,  
Goethe, the torch of science in his own  
hand,  
Poet and seeker, pressed into the dark,  
Caught one mysterious gleam from flower  
and leaf,  
And one from man's own frame, of that  
which binds



All forms of life together. He turned aside  
And lost it, saying, "I wait for light, more  
light."

And these all towered among celestial  
glories,  
And wore their legends like prophetic  
robes ;  
But who should teach me, in this deeper  
night,  
The tale of this despised and wandering  
house,  
Our lodge among the stars ; the song of  
Earth ;  
Her birth in a mist of fire,—a ball of flame,  
Slowly contracting, crusting, cracking and  
folding  
Into deep valleys and mountains that still  
changed  
And slowly rose and sank like age-long  
waves  
On the dark ocean of ever-dissolving forms ;  
Earth, a magical globe, an elfin sphere,

Quietly turning through boundlessness,  
Budding with miracles, burgeoning into  
life ;  
A murmuring forest of ferns, where the  
misty sun  
Saw wingéd monsters fighting to bring  
forth men ;  
Earth, and her savage youth, her mon-  
strous lusts,  
Mastered and curbed, till these, too, pulsed  
into music,  
And became for man the fountain of his  
own power ;  
Earth, on her shining way,  
Coloured and warmed by the sun, and  
quietly spinning  
Her towns and seas to shadow and light in  
turn ;  
Earth, by what brooding Power  
Endowed at birth with those dread  
potencies  
Which out of her teeming womb at last  
brought forth

Creatures that loved and sinned, laughed,  
    wept and prayed,  
Died, and returned to the unknown Power  
    that made them ;  
Earth, and that tale of men, the kings of  
    thought,  
Who strove to read her secret in the rocks,  
And turned, amid wild calumny and wrong,  
The lucid sword-like search-beams of the  
    mind  
On the dark passion that through un-  
    counted æons  
Crept, fought, and climbed to the celestial  
    gates,  
Three gates in one, one heavenly gate in  
    three,  
Whose golden names are Beauty, Goodness,  
    Truth.

Then, without sound, like an unspoken  
    prayer,  
The voice I heard upon the mountain  
    height,

Out of a deeper gulf of midnight rose,  
Within me, or without, invoking One  
To whom this dust, not of itself, would  
    pray :

Muse of the World, O terrible, beautiful  
    Spirit,  
Throned in pure light, since all the worlds  
    obey  
Thy golden law which, even here on  
    earth,  
Though followed blindly, leads to thy pure  
    realm,  
Couldst thou deliver me from this night at  
    last,  
Teach me the burning syllables of thy  
    tongue  
That I, even I, out of the mire and  
    clay,  
With face uplifted, and with arms up-  
    stretched  
To the Eternal Sun of Truth, might raise  
My song of adoration, not in vain.

Throned above Time, thou sawest when  
earth was born

In darkness, though none else was there to  
see ;

For there was fury in the dark, and fire,  
And power, and that creative pulse of thine,  
The throb of music, the deep rhythmic  
throes

Of That which made and binds all worlds  
in one.

\* \* \* \* \*

*In the beginning, God made heaven and earth.*

One sentence burned upon the formless  
dark—

One sentence, and no more, from that  
high realm.

The long-sought consummation of all law,  
Through all this manifold universe, might  
shine clear

In those eight words one day ; not yet ;  
not yet !

They would be larger, then ;

Not the glib prelude to a lifeless creed,  
But wide as the unbounded realms of  
thought,

The last great simplification of them all,  
The single formula, like an infinite sphere  
Enfolding Space and Time, atoms and suns,  
With all the wild fantastic hosts of life  
And all their generations, through all  
worlds,

In one pure phrase of music, like a star  
Seen in a distant sky.

I could not reach it.

All night I waited for the word in vain.

\* \* \* \* \*

## III.

## THE WINGS.

NIGHT greyed, and up the immeasurable  
abyss,  
Brimmed with a blacker night than ocean  
knew,  
The dawn-wind, like a host of spirits, flowed,  
Chanting those airy melodies which, long  
since,  
The same wild breath, obeying the same  
law,  
Taught the first pine-woods in the primal  
world.

*We are the voices.  
Could man only  
Spell our tongue,*

*He might learn  
The inscrutable secret  
And grow young.*

*Young as we are  
Who, on shores  
Unknown to man,  
Long, long since,  
In waves and woods  
Our song began.*

*Ere his footsteps  
Printed earth,  
Wild ferns and grass  
Breathed it. No man  
Heard that whispering  
Spirit pass.*

*Not one mortal  
Lay and listened.  
There was none  
Even to hear  
The sea-wave crumbling  
In the sun.*



*None to hear  
Our choral pine-woods  
Chanting deep,  
Even as now  
Our solemn cadence  
Haunts your sleep.*

*Ear was none  
To heed or hear  
When earth was young.  
Even now  
Man understands not  
Our strange tongue.*

There came a clearer rustle of nearer  
boughs.

A bird cried, once, a sharp ecstatic cry  
As if it saw an angel.

He stood there  
Against the window's dusky square of sky,  
Carrying the long curled crosier of a fern,  
My singer of the woods, my Shadow-of-a-  
Leaf,

The invisible friend with whom I used to  
talk  
In childhood, and that none but I could  
see,—  
Shadow-of-a-Leaf, shy whisperer of the  
songs  
That none could capture, and so few could  
hear ;  
A creature of the misty hills of home,  
Quick as the thought that hides in the deep  
heart  
When the loud world goes by ; vivid to me  
As flesh and blood, yet with an elfin strain  
That set him free of earth, free to run  
wild  
Through all the ethereal kingdoms of the  
mind,  
His dark eyes fey with wonder at the world,  
And that profoundest mystery of all,  
The miracle of reality ; clear, strange eyes,  
Deep-sighted, joyous, touched with hidden  
tears.  
Often he left me when I was not worthy ;

And many a time I locked my heart  
against him,

Only to find him creeping in again

Like memory, or a wild vine through a  
window

When I most needed that still voice of his  
Which never yet spoke louder than the  
breath

Of conscience in my soul. He would return  
Quietly as the rustling of a bough  
After the bird has flown; and, through a  
rift

Of evening sky, the shining eyes of a child,  
The cold clear ripple of thrushes after rain,  
The sound of a mountain-brook, or a  
breaking wave

Would teach my slumbering soul the ways  
of love.

He looked at me, more gently than of late,  
And spoke (O, if this world had ears to hear  
The sound of falling dew, the power that  
wrote

The Paradiso might recall that voice !)

*It is near daybreak. I am faithful still ;  
And I am here to answer all your need.  
The hills are old, but not so old as I ;  
The blackbird's eyes are young, but not so  
    young  
As mine that know the wonder of their sight.  
Eagles have wings. Mine are too swift to see ;  
For while I stand and whisper at your side,  
Time dwindles to a shadow. . . .*

*Like a mist  
The world dissolved around us as he spoke.  
I saw him standing dark against the sky.  
I heard him, murmuring like a spirit in  
    trance,—  
Dawn on Crotona, dawn without a cloud. . . .*

*Then, slowly emerging from that mist of  
    dreams,  
As at an incantation, a lost world  
Arose, and shone before me in the dawn.*



## II.—THE GREEKS.

---

### I.

#### PYTHAGORAS.

##### I. THE GOLDEN BROTHERHOOD.

DAWN on Crotona, dawn without a cloud.

In the still garden that Pythagoras made,  
The Temple of the Muses, firm as truth,  
Lucid as beauty, the white marriage-song  
Made visible, of beauty and truth in one,  
Flushed with the deepening East.

It was no dream.

The thrush that with his long beak shook  
and beat

The dark striped snail-shell on the marble  
flags

Between the cool white columns told me  
this.

The birds among the silvery olives pealed  
So many jargoning rivulet-throated bells  
That in their golden clashings discord  
drowned,

And one wild harmony closed and crowned  
them all.

And yet, as if the spread wings of a hawk  
Froze in the sky above them, every note  
Died on an instant.

Over the sparkling grass  
The long dark shadows of ash and pine  
began

To shrink, as though the rising of the sun  
Menaced, not only shadows, but the world.

A frightened bird flew, crying, and scatter-  
ing dew

Blindly away ; though, on this dawn of  
dawns,

Nothing had changed. The Golden  
Brotherhood stole

Up through the drifts of wet rose-laurel  
bloom

As on so many a dawn for many a year,  
To make their morning vows.

They thronged the porch,  
The lean athletes of truth, trained body  
and mind,

For their immortal trial. Among them  
towered

Milon, the soldier-wrestler. His brown  
limbs

Moved with the panther's grace, the  
warrior's pride ;

Milon, who in the Olympic contests won  
Crown after crown, but wore them on  
broad brows

Cut like fine steel for thought ; and, in his  
eyes,

Carried the light of those deep distances  
That challenge the spirit of man.

They entered in ;  
And, like the very Muses following them,  
Theano, and her Golden Sisterhood,



First of that chosen womanhood, by the  
grace

Of whose heaven-walking souls the race  
ascends,

Passed through the shining porch.

It was no dream.

In the bright marble, under the sandalled  
feet,

And in the glimmering columns as they  
passed,

The reflex of their flowing vestments glowed  
White, violet, saffron, like another dawn.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before them, through the temple's fragrant  
gloom,

The Muses, in their dim half-circle,  
towered ;

And, in the midst, over the smouldering  
myrrh,

The form of Hestia.

In her mighty shadow,  
Pythagoras, with a scroll in his right hand,  
Arose and spoke.

“ Our work is well-nigh done.  
Our enemies are closing round us now.  
I have given the sacred scrolls into the  
    hands  
Of Lysis ; and, though all else be destroyed,  
If but a Golden Verse or two live on  
In other lands, and kindle other souls  
To seek the law, our work is not in vain.  
If it be death that comes to us, we shall lose  
Nothing that could endure. It was not  
    chance  
That sent us on this pilgrimage through  
    time,  
But that which lives within us, the desire  
Of gods, to know what once was dark in  
    heaven.  
Gods were not gods who, in eternal bliss,  
Had never known this wonder—the deep  
    joy  
Of coming home. But we have purchased it,  
And now return, enriched with memories  
Of mortal love, terrestrial grief and pain,  
Into our own lost realm.”

His dark eyes flashed.  
He lifted his proud head as one who heard  
Strains of immortal music even now.  
He towered among the Muses in the dusk,  
And then, as though he, too, were carved  
in stone,  
And all their voices breathed through his  
own voice,  
“Fear nothing now,” he said. “Our foes  
can steal  
The burdens we lay down, but nothing  
more.  
All that we are we keep. They strike at  
shadows  
And cannot hurt us. Little as we may  
know,  
We have learned at least to know the  
abiding Power  
From these poor masks of clay. This dust,  
this flesh,  
All that we see and touch, are shadows of it,  
And hourly change and perish. Have we  
not seen

Cities and nations, all that is built of earth,  
Fleeting into the darkness, like grey clouds,  
And only one thing constant—the great law,  
The eternal order of their march to death ?  
Have we not seen it written upon the hills ?  
The continents and seas do not endure.  
They change their borders. Where the  
    seas are now  
Mountains will rise ; and, where the land  
    was, once,  
The dark Atlantic ends the world for man.  
But all these changes are not wrought by  
    chance.  
They follow a great order. It may be  
That all things are repeated and reborn ;  
And, in their mighty periods, men return  
And pass through their forgotten lives  
    anew.  
It may be ; for, at times, the mind recalls—  
Or half recalls—the turning of a road,  
A statue on a hill, a passing face. . . .  
It may be ; for our universe is bound  
In rhythm ; and the setting star will rise.

This many a cunning ballad-singer knows  
Who haunts the mind of man with dark  
refrains ;

Or those deep poets who foretell in verse  
The restoration of the world's great Year.  
Time never fails. Not Tanais, or the Nile  
Can flow for ever. They spring up and  
perish ;

But, after many changes, it may be  
These, too, return, with Egypt and her  
kings."

He paused a moment ; then compassion,  
grief,

Wonder and triumph, like one music, spoke  
Farewell to shadows, from his own deep soul  
Rapt, in pure vision, above the vanishing  
world :

" The torrents drag the rocks into the sea.  
The great sea smiles, and overflows the  
land.

It hollows out the valleys and returns.

The sea has washed the shining rocks away  
And cleft the headland with its golden  
fields

That once bound Sicily to her mother's  
breast.

Pharos, that was an island, far from shore  
When Homer sang, is wedded now and one  
With Egypt. The wild height where  
Sappho stood,

The beautiful, white, immortal promontory,  
Crowned with Apollo's temple, long ago  
The struggling seas have severed from the  
land.

And those fair Grecian cities, Helice  
And Buris, wondering fishermen see, far  
down,

With snowy walls and columns all aslant,  
Trembling under the unremembering wave.  
The waters of Anigris, that were sweet  
As love, are bitter as death. There was a  
time

When Etna did not burn. A time will  
come

When it will cease to burn ; for all things  
change ;  
And mightier things by far have changed  
than these  
In the slow lapse of never-ending time.  
I have seen an anchor on the naked hills,  
And ocean-shells among the mountain-tops.  
Continents, oceans, all things pass away ;  
But One, One only ; for the Eternal Mind  
Enfolds all changes, and can never change."

## II. DEATH IN THE TEMPLE.

NIGHT on Crotona, night without a star.  
I heard the mob, outside the Temple,  
roaring  
*Death to Pythagoras ! Death to those who  
know !*

Before the flushed white columns, in the  
glare  
Of all those angry torches, Cylon stood

Wickedly smiling. “ They have barred the  
doors.

Pythagoras and his forty chosen souls  
Are all within. They are trapped, and they  
shall die.

It will be best to whet the people’s rage  
Before we lay the axe, or set the torch  
Against the Muses’ temple. One wild howl  
Of ‘ sacrilege ’ may defeat us.”—This he  
called

“ Faith in the people.”

He moistened his dry lips,  
And raised his hand. The savage clamour-  
ing ceased.

One breathless moment, ere he spoke, he  
paused,

Gathering his thoughts. His thin white  
weasel face

Narrowed, his eyes contracted. In their  
pain

—Pain pitiable, a torment of the mind—  
A bitter memory burned, of how he sued  
To join that golden brotherhood in vain.



For when the Master saw him, he discerned  
A spirit in darkness, violent, empty of  
    thought,  
But full of shallow vanity, cunning lies,  
Intense ambition.

    All now was turned to hate ;  
Hate the destroyer of men, the wrecker of  
    cities,  
The last disease of nations ; hate, the fire  
That eats away the heart ; hate, the lean rat  
That gnaws the brain, till even reason glares  
Like madness through blind eyes ; hate,  
    the thin snake  
That coils like whip-cord round the victim's  
    soul  
And strangles it ; hate, that slides up  
    through his throat,  
And with its flat and quivering head usurps  
The function of his tongue,—to sting and  
    sting,  
Till all that poison which is now his life  
Is drained, and he lies dead ; hate, that  
    still lives,

And for the power to strike and sting  
again,

May yet destroy this world.

So Cylon stood,  
Quivering a moment, in the fiery glare,  
Over the multitude.

Then, in his right hand,  
He shook a roll of parchment over his head,  
Crying, *The Master said it !*

At that word,  
A snarl, as of a myriad-throated beast,  
Broke out again, and deepened into a roar—  
*Death to Pythagoras ! Death to those who  
know !*

Cylon upheld his hand, as if to bless  
A stormy sea with calm. The howling died  
Into a deadly hush. With twisted lips  
He spoke.

“ This is their Scroll, the Sacred Word,  
The Secret Doctrine of their Golden Order !  
Hear it ! ”

Then, interweaving truth with lies,  
Till even the truth struck like a venomed  
dart

Into his hearers' minds, he read aloud  
His cunningly chosen fragments.

At the end,  
He tore the scroll, and trampled it under-  
foot.

"Ye have heard," he said. "Ye are kin  
to all the beasts!

And, when ye die, your souls again  
inhabit

Bodies of beasts, wild beasts, and beasts of  
burden.

Even yet more loathsome—he that will  
not starve

His flesh, and tame himself and all man-  
kind

To bear this golden yoke shall, after death,  
Dwell in the flesh of swine. He that rejects  
This wisdom shall, hereafter, seek the light  
Through endless years, with toads, asps,  
creeping things.

Thus would they exile all our happier gods !  
Away with Bacchus and his feasts of joy !  
Back, Aphrodite, to your shameful foam !  
Men must be tamed, like beasts.

The Master said it !

And wherefore ? There are certain lordly  
souls  
Who rise above the beasts, and talk with  
gods.

These are his Golden Brotherhood ; these  
must rule !

Ye heard that verse from Homer—whom  
he loves—

Homer, the sycophant, who could call a  
prince

‘ The shepherd of his people.’ What are  
ye,

Even in this life, then, but their bleating  
flocks ?

*The Master said it !*

Homer—his demi-god,

Ye know his kind ; ye know whence Homer  
sprang ;

An old blind beggarman, singing for his  
food,  
Through every city in Greece"—(This  
Cylon called  
Honouring the people)—"already he is  
out-worn,  
Forgotten, without a word for this young  
age ;  
And great Pythagoras crowns him !

When they choose  
Their Golden Brotherhood, they lay down  
their laws,  
Declaring none may rule until he learn,  
Prostrate himself in reverence to the dead,  
And pass, through golden discipline, to  
power  
Over himself and you ; but—mark this  
well—  
Under Pythagoras ! Discipline ! Ah, that  
path  
Is narrow and difficult. Only three  
hundred souls,  
Aristocrats of knowledge, have attained

This glory. It is against the people's will  
To know, or to acknowledge those that  
know,

Or let their knowledge lead them for one  
hour.

For see—see how the gods have driven  
them mad,

Even in their knowledge! In their own  
Sacred Scroll,

Pythagoras, who derives you from the  
beasts,

Affirms that earth, this earth beneath our  
feet,

Spins like a little planet round the sun!"

A brutal bellowing, as of Asian bulls,  
Boomed from a thousand mouths. (This  
Cylon called

The laughter of the people and their gods.)  
He raised his hand. It ceased.

"*This* is their knowledge,  
And *this*," he cried, "their charter to  
obscure

What all men know, the natural face of  
things.

*This* proves their right to rule us from  
above.

They meet here nightly. Nightly they  
conspire

Against your rights, your liberties, and  
mine.

Was it not they who, when the people rose  
In Sybaris, housed her noble fugitives here ?  
And was it not Pythagoras who refused  
To send them back to Sybaris and their  
death ?

Was it not this that plunged us into war  
With Sybaris ; and, when victory crowned  
our arms,

Who but Pythagoras robbed us of its  
fruits ?

We gathered booty, and he called it theft.  
We burned their palaces, and he called it  
hate.

We avenged our sons. He called it  
butchery,

And said the wild beast wakes again in  
man.

What have we gained, then ? Nothing but  
the pride

Of saving those Pythagoras wished to save ;  
Counting gold dross, and serving his pure  
gods.

*The Master said it.* What is your judgment,  
then ? ”

He stretched one hand, appealing to the  
crowd,

And one to the white still Temple.

“ *Death ! Death ! Death !* ”

Under the flaring torches, the long waves  
Of tense hot faces opened a thousand  
mouths,

Little blue pits of shadow that raced along  
them,

And shook the red smoke with one volley-  
ing roar,—

*Death to Pythagoras ! Death to those who  
know !*

\* \* \* \* \*



But, in the Temple, through those massive  
    walls,  
While Cylon spoke, no whisper had been  
    heard ;  
Only, at times, a murmur, when he paused,  
As of a ninth wave breaking, far away.

The half-moon of the Muses, crowned with  
    calm,  
Towered through the dimness. Under  
    their giant knees,  
In their immortal shadow, those who knew  
How little was their knowledge waited  
    death  
Proudly, around their Master. Robed in  
    white,  
Beautiful as Apollo in old age,  
He stood amongst them, laying a gentle  
    hand,  
One last caress, upon that dearest head  
Bowed there before him, his own daughter's  
    hair.  
Then, tenderly, the god within him moved

His mortal lips ; and, in the darkness there,  
He spoke, as though the music of the  
spheres  
Welled from his heart, to ease the hurts of  
death.

“ Not tears, beloved. Give it welcome,  
rather !

Soon, though they spared us, this blind  
flesh would fail.

They are saving us the weary mile or two  
That end a dusty journey. The dull stains  
Of travel ; the soiled vesture ; the sick  
heart

That hoped at every turning of the road  
To see the Perfect City, and hoped in vain,  
Shall grieve us now no more. Now, at the  
last,

After a stern novitiate, iron tests,  
And grinding failures, the great light draws  
near,

And we shall pass together, through the  
Veil.”

He bowed his head. It was their hour of  
prayer ;  
And, from among the Muses in the dark,  
A woman's voice, a voice in ecstasy,  
As if a wound should bless the sword that  
made it,  
Breathed through the night the music of  
their law :

*Close not thine eyes in sleep  
Till thou hast searched thy memories of the  
day,  
Graved in thy heart the vow thou didst  
not keep,  
And called each wandering thought back to  
the way.*

*Pray to the gods ! Their aid,  
Their aid alone can crown thy work aright ;  
Teach thee that song whereof all worlds  
were made ;  
Rend the last veil, and feed thine eyes with  
light.*

*Nought shall deceive thee, then.  
All creatures of the sea and earth and  
air,  
The circling stars, the warring tribes of  
men  
Shall make one harmony, and thy soul shall  
hear.*

*Out of this prison of clay  
With lifted face, a mask of struggling  
fire,  
With arms of flesh and bone stretched up  
to pray,  
Dumb, thou shalt hear that Voice of thy  
desire.*

*Thou that wast brought so low ;  
And through those lower lives hast risen  
again,  
Kin to the beasts, with power at last to  
know  
Thine own proud banishment and diviner  
pain ;*

*Courage, O conquering soul !  
For all the boundless night that whelms thee  
now,  
Though worlds on worlds into that dark-  
ness roll,  
The gods abide ; and of their race art thou !*

There was a thunder of axes at the doors ;  
A glare as of a furnace ; and the cry,  
*Death to Pythagoras ! Death to those who  
know !*

Then, over the streaming smoke and the  
wild light  
That like a stormy sunset sank away  
Into a darker night, the deeper mist  
Rolled down, and of that death I knew no  
more.

## II.

## ARISTOTLE.

## I. YOUTH AND THE SEA.

THE mists unfolded on a sparkling coast  
 Washed by a violet sea.

It was no dream.

The clustering irised bubbles in the foam,  
 The grinding stir as through the shining  
     pebbles  
 The wave ran back; the little drifts of smoke  
 Where wet black rocks dried grey in the  
     hot sun ;  
 The pods of sea-weed, crackling underfoot,  
 All told me this.

My comrade at my side,

Moved like a shadow. I turned a  
     promontory,

And like a memory of my own lost youth,  
Shining and far, across the gulf I saw  
Stagira, like a little city of snow,  
Under the Thracian hills.

Nothing had changed.  
I saw the City where that Greek was born  
Who ranged all art, all life, and lit a fire  
That shines yet, after twice a thousand  
years ;

And strange, but strange as truth, it was  
to hear  
No slightest change in that old rhythmic  
sound

Of waves against the shore.

Then, at my side,  
My soul's companion whispered, all unseen,  
' Two thousand years have hidden him from  
the world,

Robed him in grey and bearded him with  
eld,

Untrue to his warm life. There was a time  
When he was young as truth is ; and the  
sun

Browned his young body, danced in his  
    young grey eyes ;  
And look—the time is now.'

                                    There, as he spoke,  
I saw among the rocks on my right hand,  
Lying, face downward, over a deep rock-  
    pool,  
A youth, so still that, till a herring-gull  
    swooped  
And sheered away from him with a startled  
    cry  
And a wild flutter of its brown mottled  
    wings,  
I had not seen him.

                                    Quietly we drew near,  
As shadows may, unseen.

                                    He pored intent  
Upon a sea-anemone, like a flower  
Opening its disk of blue and crimson rays  
Under the lucid water.

                                    He stretched his hand,  
And with a sea-gull's feather, touched its  
    heart.



The bright disk shrank, and closed, as  
though a flower

Turned instantly to fruit, ripe, soft, and  
round

As the pursed lips of a sea-god hiding there.  
They fastened, sucking, on the quill and  
held it.

Young Aristotle laughed. He rose to his  
feet.

“Come and see this!” he called.

Under the cliff  
Nicomachus arose, and drawing his robe  
More closely round him, crossed the slippery  
rocks  
To join his son.

There, side by side, they crouched  
Over the limpid pool,—the grey physician  
And eager boy.

“See, how it grips the feather!  
And grips the rock, too. Yet it has no  
roots.

Your sea-flowers turn to animals with  
mouths.

Take out the quill. Now it turns back  
again

Into a flower ; look—look—what lovely  
colours,

What marvellous artistry.

This never was formed  
By chance. It has an aim beyond this  
pool.

What does it mean ? This unity of  
design ?

This delicate scale of life that seems to  
ascend

Without a break, through all the forms of  
earth

From plants to men ? The sea-sponge  
that I found

Grew like a blind rock-rooted clump of  
moss

Dilating in water, shrinking in the sun ;

I know it for a strange sea-animal now,

Shaped like the brain of a man. Can it be  
true

That, as the poets fable in their songs

Of Aphrodite, life itself was born  
Here, in the sea ? ”

Nicomachus looked at him.

“ That’s a dark riddle, my son. You will  
not hear

An answer in the groves of Academe,  
Not even from Plato. When you go to  
Athens

Next year, remember, among the loftiest  
flights

Of their philosophy, that the living truth  
Is here on earth if we could only see it.

This, this at least, all true Asclepiads  
know.

Remember, always, in that battle of words,  
The truth that father handed down to son  
Through the long line of men that served  
their kind

From Æsculapius, father of us all,  
To you his own descendant :—naught  
avails

In science, till the light you seize from  
heaven

Shines through the clear sharp fact beneath  
your feet.

This is the test of both—that, in their  
wedding,

The light that was a disembodied dream  
Burns through the fact, and makes a  
lanthorn of it,

Transfigures it, confirms it, gives it new  
And deeper meanings ; and itself, in turn,  
Is thereby seen more truly.

Use your eyes ;  
And you, or those that follow you, will  
outsoar

Pythagoras.

He believed the soul descends  
From the pure realm of gods ; is clothed  
with clay ;

And, struggling upward through a myriad  
forms,

After a myriad lives and deaths, returns  
Enriched with all those memories, lord of all  
That knowledge, master of all those griefs  
and pains

As else it could not be, home to the gods,  
Itself a god, prepared for the full bliss,  
The living consummation of the whole.  
Earth must be old, if all these things are  
true.

But take this tale and read it. If it seem  
Only a tale, the light in it has turned  
Dark facts to lanthorns for me. There are  
tales  
More true than any fragment of the truth.

One of his homeless clan (who came to me  
Dying), his last disciple's wandering son,  
Gave me the scroll. I give it now to you,—  
The young swift-footed runner with the  
fire.

You'll find strange thoughts ; and, woven  
into the close,  
His Golden Verses, with a thought more  
strange.

Then, from his breast, the Asclepiad drew  
a scroll,

Smooth as old ivory, honey-stained by  
time,

A wand of whispering magic ; and the boy  
Seized it with brown young hands.

His father smiled  
And turned away, between the shining  
pools

To seek Stagira, Under his sandalled feet  
The sea-weeds crackled. His footsteps  
crunched away

Along the beach.

Upon a sun-warmed rock  
The boy outspread the curled papyrus-roll,  
Keeping each corner in place with a small  
grey stone.

There, while the white robe drifting down  
the coast

Grew smaller and smaller, till at last it  
seemed

A flake of vanishing foam, he lay full length,  
Reading the tale.

The salt on his brown skin  
Dried to a faint white powder in the sun.

Over him, growing bold, the peering gulls  
Wheeled closer, as he lay there, tranced and  
still ;

Till, through the tale, the golden verses  
breathed

Like a returning music, rhythmic tones  
Changed by new voices, coloured by new  
minds,

Yet speaking still for one time-conquering  
soul,

As on the shore the wandering ripples  
changed

And tossed new spray-drops into the spark-  
ling air,

Yet pulsed with the ancient breathing of  
the sea :

*Guard the immortal fire.*

*Honour the glorious line of the great dead.*

*To the new height let all thy soul  
aspire ;*

*But let those memories be thy wine and  
bread.*

*Quench not in any shrine  
The smouldering storax. In no human  
heart*

*Quench what love kindled. Faintly though  
it shine,  
Not till it wholly dies the gods depart.*

*Truth has remembering eyes.  
The wind-blown throng will clamour at  
Falsehood's gate.*

*Has Falsehood triumphed? Let the world  
despise  
Thy constant mind. Stand thou aside, and  
wait.*

*Write not thy thoughts on snow.  
Grave them in rock to front the thundering  
sky.*

*From Time's proud feast, when it is time  
to go,  
Take the dark road; bid one more world  
good-bye.*



*The lie may steal an hour.  
The truth has living roots, and they strike  
deep.*

*A moment's glory kills the rootless flower,  
While the true stem is gathering strength in  
sleep.*

*Out of this earth, this dust,  
Out of this flesh, this blood, this living  
tomb ;*

*Out of these cosmic throes of wrath and  
lust,  
Breaks the lost splendour from the world's  
blind womb.*

*Courage, O conquering soul !  
For all the boundless night that whelms thee  
now,  
Though suns and stars into oblivion  
roll,  
The gods abide, and of their race art  
thou.*

## II. THE EXILE.

TIME dwindled to a shadow. The grey  
mist,  
Wreathed with old legends, drifted slowly  
away  
From the clear hill-top, where the invisible  
wings  
Had brought me through the years.

It was no dream.

Clearly, as in a picture, at my feet,  
Among dark groves, the columned temples  
gleamed,  
And I saw Athens, in the sunset, dying.

Dying ; for though her shrines had not  
yet lost  
One radiant grain of what lies crumbling  
now  
Like a god's bones upon the naked hills ;  
Though the whole city wound through  
gate on gate

Of visionary splendour to one height  
Where, throned above this world, the  
    Parthenon  
Smiled at the thought of Time, her violet  
    crown  
Was woven of shadows from a darker realm,  
And I saw Athens, dying.

From that hill—

The hill of Lycabettus—on our right  
Eridanus flowed, Ilissus on the left,  
Girdling the City like two coils of fire.  
Then, as a spirit sees, I saw, unseen,  
One standing near me on the bare hillside,  
Still as a statue, gazing to the west ;  
So still that, till his lengthening shadow  
    crept  
Up to my feet, the wonder of the City  
Withheld my gaze from something more  
    august  
In that one lonely presence.

Earth and sun,  
On their great way, revealed him, with the  
    touch

Of his long stealing shadow ; yet it seemed  
The power that cast it was no mortal power.  
He towered against the dying gleams below  
Like Truth in exile.

On him, too, at last  
The doom had fallen. Claspings his grey  
robe

More closely round him, Aristotle looked  
Long, long, at his proud City. She had  
lost

More glories in that sunset than she knew ;  
For, though the sun went down in kingly  
gold

To westward, on that darkening eastern  
hill,

The bearer of a more celestial fire  
Now looked his last on Athens.

Changed, how changed,  
Was this grey form from that immortal  
youth

Who read the Golden Verses by the sea.

His brow was furrowed now ; and, on his  
face,

Life, with her sharp-edged tools of joy and  
pain,  
Had deeply engraved a legend of her own.

There, as his lengthening shadow had  
drawn my gaze,  
He seemed himself a shadow of vaster  
things,  
A still dark portent of those moving  
worlds  
Whose huge events, unseen and far away,  
Had led him thither ; and, as he once had  
shaped  
Their course, now shaped his destiny and  
doom.

He had ranged all art, all science. He  
had shaped  
Kingdoms and kings, by virtue of his part  
In the one all-shaping Mind. Had he not  
lived,  
The world that never knows its noblest  
powers

Had moved, with half mankind, another  
way.  
There, looking backward, through his life,  
he knew  
That, though the gods conceal their ways  
from men,  
Yet in their great conjunctures there are  
gleams  
That show them at their work. Theirs  
was the word,  
Twenty years back, when Philip of  
Macedon  
Summoned him, as the uncrowned king of  
thought,  
To teach his eaglet how to use his wings.  
For, by that thought, and by the disciplin-  
ed power,  
The sovran power of judgment, swift to  
seize  
Causes, effects, and laws, and wield the  
blind  
Unreasoning mass, he had wellnigh brought  
to birth

What Plato saw in vision—a State enthroned

Above the flux of time, Hellas at one,

A harmony of cities, each a chord

In an immortal song of Beauty and Truth,  
Freedom and Law. His was the moving  
power,

Not wholly aware, that strove to an end  
unseen ;

And in that power had Alexander reigned.

Autocrator of the Greek hegemony,

He had rolled all Asia back into the night.

Satrap of Persia, the proud kings of Tyre,

Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt, all bowed down ;

And Alexander shaped the conquered  
world,

But Aristotle shaped the conqueror's mind.

He had shaped that mind to ends not all  
its own.

His was the well-thumbed Odyssey that  
reposed

Under the conqueror's pillow ; his the  
love,

Fragrant with memories of the hills and  
    sea,  
That had rebuilt Stagira ; his the voice  
In the night-watches ; his the harnessed  
    thoughts  
That, like immortal sentries, mounted  
    guard  
In the dark gates of that world-quelling  
    mind.  
His was the whisper, the dark vanishing  
    hint,  
The clue to the riddle of slowly emerg-  
    ing life,  
That, imaged in Egyptian granite, rose  
Before the silent conqueror when he stared  
At that strange shape, half human and  
    half brute,  
The Sphinx, who knew the secret of the  
    world  
And smiled at him, and all his victories,  
Under the desert stars, while the deep  
    night  
Silently deepened round him.



Far away,  
In Athens, towered the bearer of the fire.  
His was the secret harmony of law  
That, while the squadrons wheeled in  
    ordered ranks,  
Each finding its full life only in the whole,  
Flashed light upon the cosmos ; his the  
    quest  
That taught the conqueror how to honour  
    truth  
And led him, while he watered his proud  
    steeds  
In all the streams from Danube to the  
    Nile,  
To send another army through the wilds,  
Ten thousand huntsmen, ranging hills and  
    woods  
At Aristotle's hest, for birds and beasts ;  
So that the master-intellect might lay hold  
Upon the ladder of life that mounts  
    through Time,  
From plants to beasts, and up, through  
    man, to God.

So all the might of Macedon had been  
turned  
To serve the truth, and to complete his  
work  
At Athens, for the conquering age to  
come ;  
When Athens, like the very City of Truth,  
Might shine upon all nations, and might  
wear,  
On her clear brows, his glory as her own.

Then came a flying rumour through the  
night.  
Earth's overlord, the autocrator, his friend,  
Alexander the Great had fallen in Babylon.  
A little cup of poison, subtle drops  
Of Lethe—in a cup of delicate gold,—  
And the world's victor slept, an iron sleep ;  
The conqueror, stricken in his conquered  
city,  
Cold, in the purple of Babylon, lay dead :  
And the slow tread of his armies as they  
passed,

Soldier by soldier, through that chamber  
of death,

To look their last upon his marble face,  
Pulsed like a muffled drum across the  
world.

Had Aristotle's cunning mixed the draught  
That murdered tyranny ? Let that whis-  
pered lie

Estrange the heart of Macedon.

There, in Athens,  
It was enough, now that his friend lay  
dead,

To know that, as the body is rent away  
From the immortal soul, his greatness now  
Had lost its earthly stay. His mighty  
mind

Walked like a ghost in Athens. It was  
enough

To hint that he had taught his king too  
well ;

Served him too well ; and played the spy  
for him ;

While, for main charge, since he had  
greatly loved

The mother who had borne him, since he  
    had poured  
His love out on her tomb, it would suffice  
To snarl that rites like these were meant  
    for gods  
And that this man who had seen behind  
    the world  
The Mover of all things, the eternal  
    God,  
The supreme Good, by these fond rites of  
    love,  
Too simple and too great, too clear, too  
    deep,  
Had robbed the little sophists of their  
    dues  
And so blasphemed against their gods of  
    clay.

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

Hurrying footsteps neared. He turned  
    and saw  
His young adopted son and Tyrtamus.  
“Nicanor! Theophrastus!—nay, lift up  
Your heads. You cannot bring me bitterer  
    news

Than I foresaw. I must be brought to judgment.

But on what grounds ? ”—

“ Dear father of us all——”

The youth, Nicanor, answered, “ When the crowd

Grins in the very face of those who ask,  
Or think, or dream that truth should be their guide ;

Nay, grins at truth itself, as at a fool  
Tricked in his grandsire’s rags, a rustic oaf,  
A blundering country simpleton who gapes

At the great city’s reeling dance of lies,  
How can the grounds be wanting ? ”

“ The true grounds,”

His ‘ Theophrastus ’ muttered, “ we know too well.

Eurymedon, and the rest, those gnat-like clans,

The sophists’ buzzing swarms, desire a change.

They hold with Heraclitus—all things change.”

His irony stung the youth. His grey eyes  
gleamed.

His voice grew harsh with anger. "Ay,  
all things change !

So justice and injustice, right and wrong,  
Evil and good, must wear each other's  
cloaks ;

And, in that chaos, when all excellence  
And honour are plucked down, and the  
clear truth

Trampled into the dirt, themselves may  
rise.

Athens is dying."

"They speak truly enough  
Of all that they can know," the master  
said.

"Change is the rhythm that draws this  
world along.

They see the change. Its law they cannot  
see.

But man who is mortal in this body of  
earth

Has also a part, by virtue of his reason,

In an enduring realm. Their prophet knew  
And heard what sophists have no souls to  
hear,—

The Harmony that includes the pulse of  
change ;

The divine Reason, past the flux of things ;  
The eternal Logos, ordering the whole  
world.”

And, as he spoke, I heard, through his  
own words,

Tones that were now a part of his own mind,  
The murmur of that old legend which he  
read

So long ago, in boyhood, by the sea.

*Time never fails. Not Tanais or the Nile  
Can flow for ever. All things pass away  
But One, One only ; for the eternal Mind  
Enfolds all changes, and can never change.*

Tyrtamus touched his arm. “ Time presses  
now.

Come with us. All is ready. On the coast,  
In a lonely creek, the quiet keel is rocking.  
Three trusty sailors wait us, and at dawn

We, too, shall find new life in a new  
world

With all that could endure. The voyager  
knows

The blindness of the cities. Each believes  
Its narrow wall the boundary of the world ;  
And when he puts to sea, their buzzing  
cries

Fade out behind him like a wrangle of  
bees.”—

“ If I remain, what then ? ”—

The hill-top shone

In the last rays. Athens was growing  
dark.

Tyrtamus answered him. “ A colder cup  
Of hemlock, and the fate of Socrates.”

The Master looked at Athens. Far away  
He traced the glimmering aisle of olive-  
trees

Where, for so long, with many a youthful  
friend

He had walked, and taught, and striven  
himself to learn.



Southward, below the Acropolis, he could  
see

The shadowy precincts of the Asclepiads,  
Guarding their sacred spring, the natural  
fount,

Loved for his father's memory.

Close beside,

The Dionysiac theatre, like a moon  
Hewn from the marble of Hymettus,  
gleamed,

A silvery crescent, dying into a cloud.

There, though the shade of Sophocles had  
fled,

Long since, he heard even now in his deep  
soul

The stately chorus on a ghostly stage  
Chanting the praise of thought that builds  
the city,

Hoists the strong sail to cross the hoary sea,  
Ploughs the unwearied earth, yokes the  
wild steed

And the untamed mountain-bull ; thought  
that contrives

Devices that can cure all ills but death :

*Of all strong things none is more strong than  
man ;  
Man that has learned to shield himself from  
cold  
And the sharp rain ; and turns his mar-  
vellous arts  
Awhile to evil ; and yet again, to good ;  
Man that is made all-glorious with his city  
When he obeys the inviolable laws  
Of earth and heaven ; but when, in subtle  
pride,  
He makes a friend of wrong, is driven astray  
And broken apart, like dust before the wind.*

All now, except the heights had died away  
Into the dark. Only the Parthenon raised  
A brow like drifted snow against the west.  
He watched it, melting into the flood of  
night  
With all those memories.

Then he turned and said,  
“ If in a moment’s thoughtless greed I  
grasped  
The prize that Athens offers me to-night,

She is not so rich but this might make her  
poor.

Death wears a gentle smile when we grow  
old ;

And I could welcome it. But she shall not  
stain

Her hands a second time. Let Athens know  
That Aristotle left her, not to save  
His last few lingering days of life on earth  
But to save Athens.

I have truly loved her,  
Next to the sea-washed town where I was  
born,

Best of all cities built by men on earth.  
But there's another Athens, pure and  
white,

Where Plato walks, a City invisible,  
Whereof this Athens is only a dim shadow ;  
And I shall not be exiled from that City."

The hilltop darkened. The blind mist  
rolled down ;

The voices died. I saw and heard no more.

### III.—MOVING EASTWARD.

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#### I.

#### FARABI AND AVICENNA.

*Grey mists enfolded Europe ; and I heard  
Sounds of bewildered warfare in the gloom.*

*Yet, like a misty star, one lampad moved  
Eastward, beyond the mountains where of old  
Prometheus, in whose hand the fire first  
shone,  
Was chained in agony. His undying ghost  
Beheld the fire returning on its course  
Unquenched, and smiled from his dark crag  
in peace,  
Implacable peace, at heaven.*

*Eastward, the fire  
Followed the road Pythagoras trod, to meet  
The great new morning.*

*The grey mists dissolved.  
And was it I—or Shadow-of-a-Leaf—that  
saw  
And heard, and lived through all he showed me  
then ?*

I saw a desert blazing in the sun,  
Tufts of tall palm ; and then—that City of  
dreams.

As though an age went past me in an hour  
I saw the silken Khalifs and their court  
Flowing like orient clouds along the streets  
Of Bagdad. In great Mahmoun's train I  
saw

Nazzam, who from the Stagirite caught his  
fire.

Long had he pondered on the Eternal Power  
Who, in the dark palm of His timeless hand  
Rolls the whole cosmos like one gleaming  
pearl.

Had he not made, in one pure timeless  
thought,  
All things at once, the last things with the  
first,  
The first life with the last ; so that man-  
kind,  
Through all its generations, co-exists  
For His eternal eyes ? Yet, from our own  
Who in the time-sphere move, the Maker  
hides  
The full revolving glory, and unfolds  
The glimmering miracles of its loveliness  
Each at its destined moment, one by one,  
In an æonian pageant that returns  
For ever to the night whence it began.  
Thus Nazzam bowed before the inscrutable  
Power,  
Yet found Him in his own time-conquering  
soul.

I saw the hundred scribes of El Mansour  
Making their radiant versions from the  
Greek.

I saw Farabi, moving through the throng  
Like a gaunt chieftain. His world-ranging  
    eyes  
Beheld the Cause of causes.

In his mind,  
Lucid and deep, the reasoning of the  
Greeks  
Flooded the world with new celestial  
light,  
Golden interpretations that made clear  
To mighty shades the thing they strove to  
say.

He carried on their fire, with five-score  
books  
In Arabic, where the thoughts of Athens,  
fledged  
With orient colours, towered to the pure  
realm  
Of Plato ; but, returning earthward still,  
Would wheel around his Aristotle's mind  
Like doves around the cote where they were  
born.

Then the dark mists that round the vision  
    flowed  
Like incense-clouds, dividing scene from  
    scene,  
Rolled back from a wide prospect, and I  
    saw,  
As one that mounts upon an eagle's wing,  
A savage range of mountains, peaked with  
    snow,  
To northward.

    They glowed faintly, for the day  
Was ending, and the shadows of the rocks  
Were stretched out to the very feet of  
    night.

Yet, far away, to southward, I could see  
The swollen Oxus, like a vanishing snake  
That slid away in slippery streaks and  
    gleams  
Through his grey reed-beds to the setting  
    sun.

Earthward we moved ; and, in the tawny  
    plain,  
Before me, like a lanthorn of dark fire



Bokhara shone, a city of shadowy towers  
Crimsoned with sunset. In its turreted  
walls

I saw eleven gates, and all were closed  
Against the onrushing night.

Then, at my side,  
My soul's companion whispered, " You  
shall see  
The Gates of Knowledge opening here anew.  
Here Avicenna dwelt in his first youth."

At once, as on the very wings of night,  
We entered. In the rustling musky gloom  
Of those hot streets, thousands of falcon  
eyes

Were round us ; but our shadows passed  
unseen

Into the glimmering palace of the Prince  
Whom Avicenna, when all others failed,  
Restored to life, and claimed for all reward  
Freedom to use the Sultan's library,  
The pride of El Mansour ; a wasted joy  
To the new Sultan. Radiances were there

Imprisoned like the innumerable slaves  
Of one too wealthy even to know their  
names ;  
Beautiful Grecian captives, bought with  
gold  
From tawny traffickers in the Ionian sea.  
A shadow, with a shadow at my side,  
I saw him reading there, intent and still,  
Under a silver lamp ; his dusky brow  
Wreathed with white silk, a goblet close at  
hand  
Brimmed with a subtle wine that could  
uncloud  
The closing eyes of Sleep.

Along each wall  
Great carven chests of fragrant cedar-wood  
Released the imprisoned magic,—radiant  
scrolls,  
Inscribed with wisdom's earliest wonder-  
cry ;  
Dark lore ; the secrets of the Asclepiads ;  
History wild as legend ; legends true  
As history, all being shadows of one light ;

Philosophies of earth and heaven ; and  
rhymes

That murmured still of their celestial  
springs.

He thrust his book aside, as in despair.

Our shadows followed him through the  
swarming streets

Into the glimmering mosque. I saw him  
bowed

Prostrate in prayer for light, light on a page  
Of subtle-minded Greek which many a day  
Had baffled him, when he sought therein  
the mind

Of his forerunner.

I saw him as he rose ;  
And, as by chance, at the outer gates he  
met

A wandering vendor of old tattered books  
Who, for three dirhems, offered him a prize.  
He bought it, out of gentle heart, and  
found

A wonder on every page,—Farabi's work,  
Flooding his Greek with light.

He could not see  
What intricate law had swept it into his  
hand ;  
But, having more than knowledge, he  
returned  
Through the dark gates of prayer ; and,  
pouring out  
His alms upon the poor, lifted his heart  
In silent thanks to God.

## II.

## AVICENNA'S DREAM.

BUT all these books—for him—were living  
thoughts,  
Clues to the darker Book of Nature's law ;  
For, when he climbed, a goat-foot boy, in  
Spring  
Up through the savage Hissar range, he  
saw  
A hundred gorges thundering at his feet  
With snow-fed cataracts ; torrents whose  
fierce flight  
Uprooted forests, tore great boulders down,  
Ground the huge rocks together ; and every  
year  
Channelled raw gullies and swept old scars  
away ;  
So that the wildered eagle beating up  
To seek his last year's eyry, found that all

Was new and strange ; and even the tuft  
of pines  
That used to guide him to his last year's  
nest  
Had vanished from the crags he knew no  
more.

There, pondering on the changes of the  
world,  
Young Avicenna, with a kinglier eye,  
Saw in the lapse of ages the great hills  
Melting away like waves ; and, from the  
sea,  
New lands arising ; and the whole dark  
earth  
Dissolving, and reshaping all its realms  
Around him, like a dream.

Thus of his hills  
And of their high snows flowing through  
his thoughts  
Was born the tale that afterwards was told  
By golden-tongued Kazwini, and wafted  
thence

Through many lands, from Tartary to  
Pameer.

For, cross-legged, in the shadow of a palm,  
The hawk-eyed teller of tales, in years  
unborn

Holding his wild clan spell-bound, would  
intone

The deep melodious legend, flowing thus,  
As all the world flows, through the eternal  
mind.

I came one day upon an ancient City.  
I saw the long white crescent of its wall  
Stained with thin peach-blood, blistered by  
the sun.

I saw beyond it, clustering in the sky,  
Ethereal throngs of ivory minarets,  
Tall slender towers, each crowned with one  
bright pearl.

It was no desert phantom ; for it grew  
And sharpened as I neared it, till I saw,  
Under the slim carved windows in the  
towers,

The clean-cut shadows, forked and black  
and small

Like clinging swallows.

In the midst up-swam  
The Sultan's palace with its faint blue  
domes,  
The moons of morning.

Wreaths of frankincense  
Floated around me as I entered in.

A thousand thousand warrior faces  
thronged

The glimmering streets. Blood - rubies  
burned like stars

In shadowy silks and turbans of all hues.

The markets glowed with costly mer-  
chandise.

I saw proud stallions, pacing to and fro  
Before the rulers of a hundred kings.

I saw, unrolled beneath the slender feet  
Of slave-girls, white as April's breathing  
snow,

Soft prayer-rugs of a subtler drift of  
bloom



Than flows with sunset over the blue and  
grey  
And opal of the drifting desert sand.

Princes and thieves, philosophers and fools  
Jostled together, among hot scents of  
musk.

Dark eyes were flashing. Blood throbbed  
darker yet.

Lean dusky fingers groped for hilts of jade.  
Then, with a roll of drums, through  
Eastern gates,

Out of the dawn, and softer than its clouds,  
Tall camels, long tumultuous caravans,  
Like stately ships came slowly stepping in,  
Loaded with shining plunder from Cathay.  
I turned and asked my neighbour in the  
throng

Who built that city, and how long ago.  
He stared at me in wonder. "It is old,  
Older than any memory," he replied.  
"Nor can our fathers' oldest legend tell  
Who built so great a city."

I went my way.

And in a thousand ages I returned,  
And found not even a stone of that great  
City,  
Not even a shadow of all that lust and  
pride.  
But only an old peasant gathering herbs  
Where once it stood, upon the naked plain.

“ What wars destroyed it, and how long  
ago ? ”

I asked him. Slowly lifting his grey head,  
He stared at me in wonder.

“ This bleak land  
Was always thus. Our bread was always  
black

And our wine harsh. It is a bitter wind  
That scourges us. But where these nettles  
grew

Nettles have always grown. Nothing has  
changed

In mortal memory here.”

“ Was there not, once,  
A mighty City ? ” I said, “ with shining  
streets,

Here, on this ground ? ” I spoke with  
bated breath.

He shook his head and smiled, the pitying  
smile

That wise men use to poets and to fools.—

“ Our fathers never told us of that City.

Doubtless it was a dream.”

I went my way.

And in a thousand ages I returned ;

And, where the plain was, I beheld the  
sea.

The sea-gulls mewed and pounced upon  
their prey.

The brown-legged fishermen crouched upon  
the shore,

Mending their tarry nets.

I asked how long

That country had been drowned beneath  
the waves.

They mocked at me. “ His wits are  
drowned in wine.

Tides ebb and flow, and fishes leap ashore ;  
But all our harvest, since the first wind  
blew,

Swam in deep waters. Are not wrecks  
washed up  
With coins that none can use, because they  
bear  
The blind old images of forgotten kings ?  
The waves have shaped these cliffs, dug  
out these caves,  
Rounded each agate on this battered beach.  
How long ? Ask earth, ask heaven. Noth-  
ing has changed.  
The sea was always here.”—

I went my way.

And in a thousand ages I returned.  
The sea had vanished. Where the ships  
had sailed  
Warm vineyards basked, among the enfold-  
ing hills.  
I saw, below me, on the winding road,  
Two milk-white oxen, under a wooden yoke,  
Drawing a waggon, loaded black with  
grapes.  
Beside them walked a slim brown-ankled  
girl.

I stood beneath a shadowy wayside oak  
To watch them. They drew near.

It was no dream.

Blood of the grape upon the wrinkled  
throats

And smoking flanks of the oxen told me  
this.

I saw the branching veins and satin skin  
Twitch at the flickering touch of a fly. I saw  
The knobs of brass that sheathed their  
curling horns,

The moist black muzzles.

Like many whose coats are white,  
Their big dark eyes had mists of blue.

Their breath  
Was meadows newly mown.

By all the gods  
That ever wrung man's heart out in the  
grave

I did not dream this life into the world.—  
Blood of the grape upon the girl's brown  
arms

And lean, young, bird-like fingers told me  
this.

Her smooth feet powdered by the warm  
grey dust ;

The grape-stalk that she held in her white  
teeth ;

Her mouth a redder rose than Omar knew ;  
Her eyes, dark pools where stars could  
shine by day ;

These were no dream. And yet,—

“ How long ago,”

I asked her, “ did the bitter sea withdraw  
Its foam from all your happy sun-burnt  
hills ? ”

She looked at me in fear. Then, with a smile,  
She answered, “ Nothing here has ever  
changed.

My father's father, in his childhood, played  
Among these vines. That oak-tree where  
you stand

Had lived a century, then. The parent oak  
From which its acorn dropped had long  
been dead.

But hills are hills. I never saw the sea.  
Nothing has ever changed.”

I went my way.

Last, in a thousand ages I returned,  
And found, once more, a City, thronged  
and tall,

More rich, more marvellous even than the  
first ;

A City of pride and lust and gold and grime,  
A City of clustering domes and stately  
towers,

And temples where the great new gods  
might dwell.

But, turning to a citizen in the gates,  
I asked who built it and how long ago.  
He stared at me as wise men stare at fools ;  
Then, pitying the afflicted, he replied  
Gently, as to a child :

“ The City is old,  
Older than all our histories. Its birth  
Is lost among the impenetrable mists  
That shroud the most remote antiquity.  
None knows, nor can our oldest legends tell  
Who built so great a City.”

I went my way.

## IV.—THE TORCH IN ITALY.

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LEONARDO DA VINCI.

I.

HILLS AND THE SEA.

THE mists rolled back. I saw the City of  
Flowers  
Far down, upon the plain ; and, on the  
slope  
Beside us—we were shadows and unseen,—  
Giulio, the painter, sketching rocks and  
trees.  
We watched him working, till a pine-cone  
crackled  
On the dark ridge beyond us, and we saw,  
Descending from the summits like a god,



A deep-eyed stranger with a rose-red cloak  
Fluttering against the blue of the distant  
hills.

He stood awhile, above a raw ravine,  
Studying the furrows that the rains had  
made  
Last winter. Then he searched among the  
rocks  
As though for buried gold.

As he drew near  
Giulio looked up and spoke, and he replied.  
Their voices rose upon the mountain air  
Like a deep river answering a brook,  
While each pursued his work in his own  
way.

*Giulio.*

What are you seeking ? Something you  
have lost ?

*The Stranger.*

Something I hope to find.

*Giulio.*

You dropped it here ?  
Was it of value ? Not your purse, I hope.

*The Stranger.*

More precious than my purse.

*Giulio.*

Your lady's ring ?  
A jewel, perhaps ?

*The Stranger.*

A jewel of a sort ;  
But it may take a thousand years to  
trace it  
Back to its rightful owner.

*Giulio (laughing).*

O, you are bitten  
By the prevailing fashion. Since the  
plough

Upturned those broken statues, all the  
world  
Is relic-hunting; but, my friend, you'll  
find  
No Aphrodite here.

*The Stranger (picking up a fossil).*

And yet I think  
It was the sea, from which she rose alive,  
That shaped these rocks and left these  
twisted shells  
Locked up, like stone in stone. They must  
have lived  
Once, in the sea.

*Giulio.*

Ah, now I understand.  
You're a philosopher,—one of those who  
tread  
The dusty road to Nowhere, which they  
call  
Science.

*The Stranger.*

All roads to truth are one to me.

*Giulio.*

Sir, you deceive yourself. Your road can  
lead

Only to error. The Adriatic lies  
How many miles away? We stand up  
here

On these unchanging hills; and yet, to fit  
Your theory, you would roll the seas above  
The peaks of Monte Rosa.

*The Stranger.*

But these shells?  
How did they come here?

*Giulio.*

Obviously enough,  
The sea being where it is, it was the Flood  
That left them here.

*The Stranger.*

Then Noah must have dropped them  
Out of his Ark. They never crept so far ;  
And Noah must have dumped his ballast,  
too,  
Among our hills ; for all those rippled  
rocks  
Up yonder were composed of blue sea-clay.  
I have found sea-weed in them, turned to  
stone,  
The claws of crabs, the skeletons of fish.  
Think you that, if your Adriatic lay  
Where it now lies, its little sidling crabs  
Could scuttle through the Deluge to the  
hills ?  
Your Deluge must have risen above the  
tops  
Of all the mountains. If it rose so high,  
Then it embraced the globe, and made our  
earth  
One smooth blue round of water. When it  
sank

What chasm received those monstrous  
cataracts ?

Or was the sun so hot it sucked them up  
And turned them into a mist ?

Is not that tale  
A racial memory, lingering in our blood,  
Of realms that now lie buried in the sea,  
Or isles that heaved up shining from the  
deep  
In old volcanic throes ?

*Giulio.*

I must confess  
I always feel a pang, sir, when I see  
A man of talent wasting his fine powers  
On this blind road.

*The Stranger.*

Show me a better way.

*Giulio.*

The way of Art, sir.

*The Stranger.*

Yes. That is a road  
I have wished that I might travel. But  
are you sure  
Our paths are not eventually the same ?  
Why have you climbed up here ? To paint  
the truth,  
As you perceive it, in those rocks and trees.  
Suppose that, with your skill of hand, you  
saw  
The truth more clearly, saw the lines of  
growth,  
The bones and structure of the world you  
paint,  
And the great rhythm of law that runs  
through all,  
Might you not paint them better even than  
now ?  
Might you not even approach the final  
cause  
Of all our art and science,—the pure truth  
Which also is pure beauty ?

*Giulio.*

Genius leaps  
Like lightning to that mark, sir, and can  
waive  
These pains and labours.

*The Stranger.*

O, I have no doubt  
That you are right. I speak with diffidence,  
And as a mere spectator ; one who likes  
To know, and seizes on this happy chance  
Of learning what an artist really thinks.

*Giulio.*

We artists, sir, are not concerned with laws,  
Except to break them. Genius is a law  
Unto itself.

*The Stranger.*

•           And that is why you've made  
Your wood-smoke blue against that shining  
cloud ?



Against the darker background of the hill  
It is blue in nature also ; but it turns  
To grey against the sky.

*Giulio.*

I am not concerned  
With trivial points.

*The Stranger.*

But if they point to truth  
Beyond themselves, and through that  
change of colour  
Reveal its cause, and knit your scheme in  
law ;  
Nay, as a single point of light will speak  
To seamen of the land that they desire,  
Transfiguring all the darkness with one  
spark,  
Would this be trivial ? Sir, a touch will  
do it.  
Lend me your brush a moment. Had you  
drawn

Your rocks here in the foreground, thus and  
thus,

Following the ribbed lines of those beds of  
clay

As the sea laid them, and the fire upheaved  
And cracked them, you'll forgive me if I say  
That they'd not only indicate the law  
Of their creation ; but they'd look like  
rocks

Instead of——

*Giulio.*

Pray don't hesitate.

*The Stranger.*

I speak

As a spectator only ; but to me—  
Sponges or clouds perhaps——

*Giulio.*

•  
We artists, sir,  
Aim at this very effect. To us, the fact  
Is nothing. There is a kingdom of the mind,

Where all things turn to dreams. Nothing  
is true  
In that great kingdom ; and our subtlest  
work  
Is that which has no basis.

*The Stranger.*

Then I fear  
My thoughts are all astray ; for I  
believed  
That kingdom to be more substantial far  
Than anything we see ; and that the road  
Into that kingdom is the road of law  
Which we discover here,—the Word made  
Flesh.

*Giulio.*

I do not understand you—quite. I fear  
Yours is the popular view — that art  
requires  
Purposes, meanings, even moralities  
With which we artists, sir, are not con-  
cerned.

*The Stranger.*

O, no. I merely inquire. I wish to hear  
From one who knows. I am a little  
puzzled.

You have dismissed so much—this outer  
world

And all its laws ; and now this other, too.

I am no moralist ; but I must confess  
That, in the greatest Art, I have always  
found

A certain probity, a certain splendour  
Of inner and outer constancy to law.

*Giulio.*

All genius is capricious. You'll admit  
That men who lived like beasts have  
painted well.

*The Stranger.*

Yes ; but not greatly, except when their  
own souls

Have gripped the beast within them by the  
throat,  
And risen again to reassert the law.

*Giulio.*

Art lives by its technique, a fact the herd  
Will never understand. A noble soul  
Is useless, if it cannot wield a brush.

*The Stranger.*

May not technique include control and  
judgment ?  
Alone, they are not enough ; but, for the  
heights,  
More is required, not less. I'd even add  
Some factors you despise.

*Giulio.*

Your shells, for instance ?  
And that mysterious and invisible sea ?

*The Stranger.*

The sea whence Beauty rose.

*Giulio.*

You have an eye  
For Beauty, too. You are a lover of art  
And you are rich. What opportunities  
You throw away ! Was it not you I saw  
Yesterday, in the market-place at Flor-  
ence,  
Buying caged birds and tossing them into  
the air ?

*The Stranger.*

It may have been. I like to see them fly.  
The structure of the wing,—I think that  
men  
Will fly one day.

*Giulio.*

It was not pity, then ?

*The Stranger.*

I'd not exclude it. As I said before,  
I would include much.

*Giulio.*

You were speaking, sir,  
Of Art. There are so few, so very few  
Who understand what Art is.

*The Stranger.*

Fewer still  
Who know the few to choose.

*Giulio.*

Perhaps you'd care  
To see some work of mine. I do not live  
In Florence ; but I'd like to set your feet  
On the right way. We are a little group  
Known to the few that know. You'd find  
our works  
Far better worth your buying than caged  
birds.  
Pray let me know your name, sir.

*The Stranger.*

Leonardo.

## II.

## AT FLORENCE.

I SAW the house at Florence, cool and white  
With violet shadows, drowsing in the sun.  
The fountain splashed and bubbled in the  
court.

Beside it, in a space of softened light,  
Under a linen awning, ten feet high,  
Roofing a half-enclosure, where three walls  
Were tinted to a pine-wood's blue-black  
shade,

I saw a woman seated on a throne,  
And Leonardo, with his radiant eyes,  
Glancing from his wet canvas to her face.

Her face was filled with music. Music  
swelled

Above them, from a gallery out of sight ;



And as the soft pulsation of the strings  
Died into infinite distances, he spoke.  
His voice was more than music. It was  
    thought  
Ebbing and flowing, like a strange dark sea.

“ Listen to me ; for I have things to say  
That I can only tell the world through you.  
Were you not just a little afraid of me  
At first ? You know by popular report  
I dabble in Black Arts, and so I would  
To keep you here, an hour or two each day,  
Until the mystery we have conjured up  
Between us—there again, it came and  
    went—

Smiles at the centuries in their masquerade  
As you smiled, then, at me.

    Not mockery—quite—  
Not irony either ; something we evoked  
That seems to have caught the ironist off  
    his guard,  
And slyly observes the mocker's naked  
    heel.

So we'll defend humanity, you and I,  
Against the worst of tyrannies,—the blind  
sneer

Of intellectual pride. The subtle fool  
And cunning sham at least shall meet one  
gaze

More subtle, more secure; not yours or  
mine,

But Nature's own—that calm, inscrutable  
smile

Whereby each erring atomy is restored  
To its true place, taught its true worth at  
last,

And heaven's divine simplicity renewed.

Not yours or mine, Madonna. Could I trust  
To brush and palette or my skill of hand  
For this? Oh, no! We need Black Arts,  
I think,

Black Arts and incantations, or you'd  
grow

Weary of sitting here.

Last night I made

Five bubbles of glass—you blow them with  
a pipe

Over a flame,—and set them there to  
dance

Upon the fountain's feathery crest of spray.  
Piero thought it waste of time. He jeers  
At these mechanical arts of mine. I  
watched

That dance and learned a little of the  
machine

We call the world. I left them leaping  
there

To catch your eyes this morning, and  
learned more.

So one thing leads to another. A device,  
Mechanical as the spinning of the stars  
In the Arch-Mechanic's Cosmos, woke a  
gleam

Of wonder ; and I lay these Black Arts bare  
To make you wonder more.

Black Arts, Madonna ;  
For even such trifles may discover depths  
Dark as the pit of death ; as when I laid

Dice on a drum, and by their trembling  
showed

Where underneath our armoured city walls  
The enemy dug his mines.

And now—you smile,  
To think how wars are won.

Catgut and wood  
Have served our wizardry. Yes ; that's  
why I set

Musicians in the gallery overhead,  
To pluck their strings ; and, while you  
listened, so

Painted the living spirit that they bound  
With their bright spells before me, in your  
face.

Black Arts, Madonna, and cold-blooded,  
too.

O, sheer mechanical, playing upon your  
mind

And senses, as they too were instruments,  
Or colours to be ground and mixed and used  
For purposes that were not yours at all,

Until the living Power that uses me  
Breathes on this fabric, also made by  
    hands,  
The inscrutable face that smiles all arts  
    away.

How many tales I have told you sitting  
    here  
To make you see, according to my need,  
The comedy of the world, its lights and  
    shades :  
The sensual feast ; the mockery of renown ;  
Youth and his innocent boastings, unaware  
How swiftly run the sands ; Youth that  
    believes  
His own bright scorn, for others' aching  
    faults  
Has crowned him conqueror ; Youth so  
    nobly sure  
That plans are all achievements ; quite,  
    quite sure  
Of his own victory where all others failed ;  
Age, with blind eyes, or staring at defeat,

Dishonoured ; Age, in honour, with a  
wreath  
Of fading leaves in one old trembling hand,  
And at his feet the dark all-gulfing grave ;  
Envy, the lean and wizened witch behind  
him,  
Riding on death, like his own crooked  
shadow,  
Snapping at heaven with one contemptuous  
hand,  
As though she hated God ; and, on her face,  
A mask of fairness ; Envy, with those  
barbs  
Of wicked lightning darting from her flesh ;  
Envy, whose eyes the palm and olive  
wound ;  
Whose ears the laurel and myrtle pierce  
with pain ;  
A fiery serpent eating at her heart ;  
A quiver on her back with tongues for  
arrows.  
Each of these pictures left its little shadow,  
A little memory in your spellbound face,

And so your picture smiles at all of these,  
And at one secret never breathed aloud,  
Because I think we knew it all too well.

Once only, in a riddle, I made you smile  
At our own secret also, when I said  
'If liberty be dear to you, Madonna,  
Never discover that your painter's face  
Is Love's dark prison.'

Sailing to the south  
From our Cilicia, you and I have seen  
Beautiful Cyprus, rising from the wave ;  
Cyprus, that island where Queen Venus  
reigned.

The blood of men was drawn to that rough  
coast

As tides, on other shores, obey the moon.  
Glens of wild dittany, winding through the  
hills

From Paphos, her lost harbour, to the peak  
Of old Olympus, where she tamed the gods,  
Enticed how many a wanderer.

Odorous winds

Welcomed us, ruffling, crumpling the  
smooth brine

Into a sea of violets. We drew near.

We heard the muffled thunder of the surf !

What ships, what fleets had broken among  
those rocks !

We saw a dreadful host of shattered hulls,

Great splintered masts, innumerable keels

With naked ribs, like skeletons of whales

All weltering there, half-buried in the sand.

The foam rushed through them. On their  
rotted prows

And weed - grown poops the sea - gulls  
perched and screamed ;

And all around them with an eerie cry

An icy wind was blowing.

It would seem

Like the Last Judgment, should there ever  
be

A resurrection of the ships we saw

Lying there dead. These things we saw  
and live.

And now your picture smiles at all of these.



The secret still evades me everywhere ;  
And everywhere I feel it, close at hand.  
Do you remember when Vesuvius flamed  
And the earth shivered and cracked beneath  
our feet ?

Ten villages were engulfed. I wandered  
out

Among the smoking fragments of earth's  
crust

To see if, in that breaking-up of things,  
Nature herself had now perhaps unsealed  
Some of her hidden wonders.

On that day,  
I found a monstrous cavern in the hills,  
A rift so black and terrible that it dazed me.  
I stood there, with my back bent to an arch,  
My left hand clutching at my knee, my  
right

Shading contracted eyes. I strained to see  
Into that blackness, till the strong desire  
To know what marvellous thing might lurk  
within

Conquered my fear. I took a ball of thread

And tied one end to a lightning-blasted  
tree.

I made myself a torch of resinous pine  
And entered, running the thread through  
my left hand,  
On, on, into the entrails of the world.

O, not Odysseus, when his halting steps  
Crept through that monstrous hollow to  
the dead,

Felt such a fearful loneliness as I ;  
For there were voices echoing through *his*  
night,

And shadows of lost friends to welcome  
him ;

But my fierce road to knowledge clove its  
way

Into a silence deeper than the grave,  
Into a darkness where not even a ghost  
Could stretch its hands out, even in farewell.  
And all that I could see around me there  
Was my own smoking torchlight, walls of  
rock

And awful rifts where other caverns  
yawned.

And all that I could hear was my own steps  
Echoing through endless darkness, on and  
on.

My thread ran out. My torch was burning  
low,

When, through the darkness, I became  
aware

Of something darker, looming up in front ;  
Solid as rock, and yet more strange and  
wild

Than any shadow. My flesh and blood  
turned cold

Before that awful Presence in the dark.

I left the thread behind me, and crept on ;  
Held up the guttering torch ; and there, O  
there,

I saw it, and I live.

A monstrous thing  
With jaws that might have crushed a ship,  
and bones

That might upheave a mountain ; a  
Minotaur,  
A dreadful god of beasts, now turned to  
stone,  
Like a great smoke-bleared idol. The wild  
light  
Smeared it with blood ; a thing that once  
had lived ;  
A thing that once might turn the sea to  
mist  
With its huge flounderings, and would  
make a spoil  
For kingdoms with the ships it drove  
ashore.  
The torchlight flared against it, and went  
out ;  
And I groped back, in darkness. . . .  
And you smile.  
O, what a marvel of enginery was there !  
What giant thews and sinews once con-  
trolled  
The enormous hinges of the rock-bound  
bones

I saw in my dark cavern. Yet it perished,  
And all its monstrous race has perished, too.  
Was it all waste ? Did it prepare the way  
For lordlier races ? Even, perhaps, for  
men ?

Only one life to track these wonders home,  
So many roads to follow. Never the light  
Till all be travelled.

We will not despise  
Mechanical arts, Madonna, while we use  
These marvellous living instruments of  
ours.

Rather we'll seek to master for ourselves  
The Master's own devices. Birds can fly,  
And so shall men, when they have learned  
the law

Revealed in every wing. Far off, I have  
seen

Men flying like eagles over the highest  
clouds ;

Men that in ships like long grey swordfish  
glide

Under the sea ; men that in distant lands  
Will speak to men in Italy ; men that bring  
The distant near, and bind all worlds in  
one.

And yet—I shall not see it. I have  
explored

This human instrument, traced its delicate  
tree

Of nerves, discovering how the life-blood  
flows

Out of the heart, through every branching  
vein ;

And how, in age, the thickening arteries  
close

And the red streams no longer feed this  
frame,

And the parched body starves at last and  
dies.

I have built bridges. Armies tread them  
now.

The rains will come. The torrents will roll  
down

And sweep them headlong to the sea, one  
day.

I have painted pictures. Let cicadas  
chirrup

Of their brief immortality. I know  
How soon these colours fade.

And yet, and yet,  
I do not think the Master of us all  
Would set us in His outer courts at night  
As the Magnificent, once, in the flush of  
wine,  
Set Angelo, to flatter an idle whim  
And sculpture him a godhead out of snow.

The work's not wasted. In my youth I  
thought

That I was learning how to live, and now  
I see that I was learning how to die.

Then comes the crowning wonder. We  
strip off

The scaffolding ; for the law is learned at  
last ;

And our reality, Parian then, not snow,

Dares the full sun of morning, fronts the  
gaze  
Of its divine Pygmalion ; lives and  
breathes ;  
And knows, then, why it passed through  
all those pains.

Now—the last touch of all ! And, as this  
face  
Begins to breathe against those ancient  
rocks,  
Let music breathe these arts of mine away.”

Music awoke. It throbbed like hidden wings  
Above them. Then a minstrel’s golden  
voice,  
As from a distance, on those wings arose  
And poured the Master’s passion into song :

*Burn, Phoenix, burn ;  
And, in thy burning, take  
All that love taught me, all I strove to learn,  
All that I made, and all I failed to make.*



*If it be true*

*That from the fire thou rise*

*In splendour, as men say dead worlds renew*

*Their light from their own embers in the  
skies,*

*In thy fierce nest*

*I'd share that death with thee,*

*To make one shining feather on thy breast*

*Of all I am, and all I strove to be.*

*The worthless bough*

*May kindle a rich coal ;*

*And in our mingling ashes, how wilt thou*

*Know mine from thine, ere both reclothe  
thy soul ?*

*Now—as thy wings*

*Arise from this proud fire,*

*My dust in thy assumption mounts and  
sings ;*

*And, being a part of thee, I still aspire.*

## V,—IN FRANCE.

JEAN GUETTARD.

### I.

#### THE ROCK OF THE GOOD VIRGIN.

WHO knows the name of Jean Guettard  
to-day ?

I wrestled with oblivion all night long.

At times a curtain on a lighted stage

Would lift a moment, and fall back again.

Once, in the dark, a sunlit row of vines

Gleamed through grey mists on his in-  
visible hill.

The mists rolled down. Then, like a miser,

Night

Caught the brief glory in her blind cloak  
anew.

At dawn I heard the voice of Shadow-of-  
a-Leaf  
Breathing a quiet song. It seemed remote  
And yet was near, as when the listener's  
heart  
Fills a cold shell with its remembered  
waves.

“When I was young,” said Jean Guettard,  
“My comrades and myself would hide  
Beneath a tall and shadowy Rock  
In summer, on the mountain-side.  
The wind and rain had sculptured it—  
Such tricks the rain and wind will play,—  
To likeness of a Mother and Child ;  
But wind and rain,” said Jean Guettard,  
“Have worn the rocks for many a day.”

“The peasants in that quiet valley,  
Among their vineyards bending there,  
Called it the Rock of the Good Virgin,  
And breathed it many an evening prayer.  
When I grew up I left my home

For dark Auvergne, to seek and know  
How all this wondrous world was made ;  
And I have learned," said Jean Guettard,  
" How rains can beat, and winds can blow."

" When I came home," said Jean Guettard,  
" Not fifty years had fled by.

I looked to see the Form I loved

With arms outstretched against the sky.  
Flesh and blood as a wraith might go.

This, at least, was enduring stone.  
I lifted heart and eyes aglow,  
Over the vines," said Jean Guettard. . . .

" The rain had beaten, the wind had blown,  
The hill was bare as the sky that day.  
Mother and Child from the height had gone.  
The wind and rain," said Jean Guettard,  
" Had crumbled even the Rock away."

" Shadow-of-a-Leaf," I whispered, for I  
saw  
The crosier of a fern against the grey ;

And, as the voice died, he stood dark before  
me.

“ You sang as though you loved him. Let  
the mists  
Unfold.”

He smiled. “ See, first, that Rock,” he  
said,  
“ Dividing them.”

At once, through drifting wreaths  
I saw a hill emerging, a green hill  
Clothed with the dying rainbow of those  
tears

The mist had left there. From the rugged  
crest

Slowly the last thin veils dissolved away.  
I saw the Rock upstanding on the height  
So closely, and so near me, that I knew  
Its kinship with the rocks of Fontainebleau ;  
The sandstone whose red grains for many  
an age

Had been laid down, under a vanished sea ;  
A Rock, upthrust from darkness into light,  
By buried powers, as power upthrust it now

In the strong soul, with those remembering  
hills,  
Till, graven by frost and beaten by wind  
and rain,  
It slowly assumed the semblance of that  
Form  
Of Love, the Mother, holding in her arms  
The Child of Earth and Heaven ; a shape  
of stone ;  
An image ; but it was not made by hands.

Footsteps drew near. I heard an eager  
voice

Naming a flower in Latin.

Up they came—  
Each with a bunch of wild flowers in his  
hand,—

A lean old man, with snowy wind-blown  
hair,

Panting a little ; and, lightly at his side,  
Offering a strong young arm, a sun-burnt  
boy,

Of eighteen years, with darkly shining eyes.

It was those eyes, deep, scornful, tender,  
    gay,  
Dark fires at which all falsehood must  
    consume,  
That told me who they were—the young  
    Guettard,  
And his old grandsire.

    Under the Rock they stood.  
“ Good-bye. I’ll leave you here,” the old  
    man said.

“ We’ve had good luck. These are fine  
    specimens.

The last, perhaps, that we shall find  
    together ;

For when you leave your home to-morrow,  
    Jean,

I think you are going on a longer journey  
Even than you know. Perhaps, when you  
    are famous,

You will not be so proud as I should be,  
Were I still living, to recall the days  
When even I, the old apothecary,  
Could teach you something.”

Jean caught a wrinkled hand,  
Held it between his own, and laughed away  
That shadow, but old Descurain looked at  
him,

Proudly and sadly. "It will not rest with  
you,

Or your affection, Jean. The world will  
see to it.

The world that knows as much of you and me,  
As you and I of how that creeper grew  
Around your bedroom window."

As he spoke,  
Along the lower slopes the mists began  
To blow away like smoke. The patch of  
vines

Crept out again ; and, far below I saw,  
Sparkling with sun, the valley of the Juine,  
The shining river, and the small clear town  
Étampes, the grey old church, the cluster-  
ing roofs,

The cobbled square, the gardens, wet and  
bright

With blots of colour.



“ I have lived my life  
Out of the world, down there,” Descurain  
said,

“ Compounding simples out of herbs and  
flowers ;

Reading my Virgil in the quiet evenings,  
Alone, for all those years ; and, then, with  
you.

*O fortunatos*—Do we ever know

Our happiness till we lose it ? You’ll  
remember

Those Georgics—the great praise of Science,  
Jean !

And that immortal picture of the bees !

No doubt you have chosen rightly. For  
myself,

I know, at least, where healing dittany  
grows,

And where earth’s beauty hides in its dark  
heart

An anodyne, at last, for all our pain.

And one thing more I have learned, and  
see with awe

On every side, more clearly, that on earth  
There's not one stone, one leaf, one creeping  
thing,

No ; nor one act or thought, but plays its  
part

In the universal drama.

You'll look back

One day on this lost bee-like life of mine ;  
And find, perhaps, in its obscurest hour  
And lowliest task, the moment when a  
light

Began to dawn upon a child's dark mind.  
The old pestle and mortar, and the shining  
jars,

The smell of the grey bunches of dried  
herbs,

The little bedroom over the market-  
square,

The thrifty little house where you were  
born,

The life that all earth's great ones would  
despise—

All these, perhaps, were needed, as the hand

That led you, first, in childhood to the hills.  
You'll see strange links, threads of effect  
    and cause,  
In complicated patterns, growing clear  
And binding all these memories, each to  
    each,  
And all in one ; how one thing led to  
    another,  
My simples to your love of plants and  
    flowers,  
And this to your new interest in the haunts  
That please them best—the kinds of earth  
    the rocks,  
And minerals that determine where they  
    grow,  
Foster them, or reject them. You'll dis-  
    cover  
That all these indirections are not ruled  
By chance, but by dark predetermined  
    laws.  
You'll grope to find what Power, what  
    Thought, what Will,  
Determined them ; till, after many a year,

At one swift clue, one new-found link, one  
touch,  
They are flooded with a new transfiguring  
light,  
Deep as the light our kneeling peasants  
know  
When, dumbly, at the ringing of a bell  
They adore the sacred elements ; a light  
That shows all Nature, of which your life  
is part,  
Bound to that harmony which alone sets  
free ;  
And every grain of dust upon its way  
As punctual to its purpose as a star.

This Rock has played its part in many a  
life.

We know it, for we see it every day.  
No angelus ever rang, but some one's eyes  
Were lifted to it ; and, returning home,  
The wanderer strains to see it from the  
road.

What is it, then ? It plays no greater part

Than any grain of dust beneath our feet,  
Could we discern it. A dumb block of  
stone,

A shadow in the mind, a thought of God,  
A little fragment of the eternal order,  
That postulates the whole.

If we could see

The universal Temple in which it stands  
We, too, should bow our heads; for if  
this Form

Were shaped by Chance, it was the self-  
same Chance

That gave us love and death. In this the fool  
Descries a reason for denying all  
To which our peasants kneel. The years to  
come

(And you will speed them, Jean) will  
rather make

This dust the floor of heaven."

The old man laid

His bunch of herbs and flowers below the  
Rock,

Smiled, nodded, and went his way.

“ Was it by chance,”  
Thought Jean Guettard, “ that grandad  
laid them so ;  
Or by design ; or by some vaster art  
Transcending, yet including, all our  
thoughts,  
And memories, with those flowers and that  
dumb stone,  
As chords in its world-music ? Why  
should flowers  
Laid thus ”—he laid his own at the feet  
of the Rock—  
“ Transfigure it with such beauty that it  
stood  
Blessing him, from its arch of soft blue  
sky  
Above him, like a Figure in a shrine ? ”  
  
He touched its glistening grains. “ I think  
that Ray  
Was right,” he murmured. “ This was  
surely made  
Under the sea ; sifted and drifted down

From vanished hills and spread in level  
beds,  
Under deep waters ; compressed by the  
sea's weight ;  
Upheaved again by fire ; and now, once  
more,  
Wears down by way of the rain and brook  
and river,  
Back to the sea ; but all by roads of law.”  
Then, looking round him furtively, to  
make sure  
No one was near, he dropped upon his  
knees.  
The mist closed over him. Rock and hill  
were lost  
In greyness once again.

## II.

MALESHERBES AND THE BLACK  
MILESTONES.

MOMENTS were years,  
Till, at the quiet whisper of Shadow-of-a-  
Leaf,  
Those veils withdrew, and showed another  
scene.  
I saw two dusty travellers, blithely walking  
With staffs and knapsacks, on a straight  
white road  
Lined with tall sentinel poplars as to  
await  
A king's return ; but scarce a bird took  
heed  
Of those two travel-stained wanderers—  
Jean Guettard  
And Malesherbes, his old school-friend.



Larks might see  
Two wingless dots that crept along the  
road.

The Duke rode by and saw two vagabonds  
With keenly searching eyes, as they jogged  
on

To Moulins. Birds and Duke and horse  
could see,

Against the sky, that old square prison-  
tower,

The tall cathedral, the dark gabled roofs,  
Thronging together behind its moated wall ;  
But not one eye in all that wide green  
land

Saw what those two could see ; and not one  
soul

Espied the pilgrim thought upon its way  
To change the world for man.

The pilgrim thought !  
Say rather the swift hunter, tracking down  
More subtly than an Indian the dark  
spoor  
Of his gigantic prey.

I saw them halt  
Where, at the white road's edge, a mile-  
stone rose  
Out of the long grass, like a strange black  
gnome,  
A gnome that had been dragged from his  
dark cave  
Under the mountains, and now stood there  
dumb,  
Striving to speak. But what ?  
" There ! There ! Again ! "  
Cried Jean Guettard. They stood and  
stared at it,  
But not to read as other travellers use  
How far themselves must journey.  
They knelt down  
And looked at it, and felt it with their  
hands.  
A farmer passed, and wondered were they  
mad.  
For, when they hailed him, and his tongue  
prepared  
To talk of that short cut across the fields

Beside the mill-stream, they desired to  
know

Whence the black milestone came. It was  
the fourth

That they had passed since noon.

He grinned at them.

“Black stones?” he said, “you’ll find  
them all the way

To Volvic now!”

“To Volvic,” cried Guettard,  
“Volcani vicus!”

They seized their staffs again;  
Halted at Moulins, only to break a crust  
Of bread and cheese, and drink one bottle  
of wine,

Then hastened on, following the giant trail,  
Milestone by milestone, till the scent grew  
hot;

For now they saw, in the wayside cottages,  
The black stone under the jasmine’s cluster-  
ing stars;

And children, at the half-doors, wondered  
why

Those two strange travellers pushed the  
leaves away  
And tapped upon their walls.

At last they saw,  
Black as a thundercloud anchored to its  
hill,  
Above the golden orchards of Limagne,  
The town of Riom. All its walls were  
black.

Its turreted heights with leering gargoyles  
crawled  
Above them, like that fortress of old Night  
To which Childe Roland came.

No slughorn's note  
Challenged it, and they set no lance in rest,  
But dusty and lame, with strangely burning  
eyes,  
Those footpads, quietly as the ancient  
Word,  
Stole into that dark lair and sought their  
prey.  
Surely, they thought, the secret must be  
known

To some that live, eat, sleep, in this grim  
den.

Have they not guessed what monster lurks  
behind

This blackness ?

In the chattering streets they saw  
The throng around the fruit-stalls, and the  
priest

Entering the Sainte Chapelle. With eyes  
of stone

The statue of that lover of liberty

The chancellor, L'Hôpital, from his great  
dark throne

Gazed, and saw less than the indifferent  
sparrow

That perched upon his hand. Barefooted  
boys

Ran shouting round the fountain in the  
square.

It was no dream. Along the cobbled street,  
Clattering like ponies in their wooden shoes,  
Three girls went by with baskets full of  
apples.

The princely butcher, standing at his door,  
Rosily breathing sawdust and fresh blood,  
Sleeked his moustache and rolled an  
amorous eye.

It was no dream. They lived their light-  
winged lives

In this prodigious fabric of black stone,  
Slept between walls of lava, drank their wine  
In taverns whose black walls had risen in  
fire ;

Prayed on the slag of the furnace ; roofed  
their tombs

With slabs of that slaked wrath ; and saw  
no more

Than any flock of birds that nightly roost  
On the still quivering Etna.

It was late,  
Ere the two travellers found a wise old host  
Who knew the quarries where that stone  
was hewn ;

Too far for them that night. His inn could  
lodge them.

A young roast fowl ? Also he had a wine,

The Duc de Berry, once. . . . Enough !  
they supped

And talked. Gods, how they talked and  
questioned him,—

The strangest guests his inn had ever seen.  
They wished to know the shape of all the  
hills

Around those quarries. “There were  
many,” he said,

“Shaped at the top like this.” He lifted up  
An old round-bellied wine-cup.

At the word

He wellnigh lost his guests. They leapt  
to their feet.

They wished to pay their quittance and  
press on

To see those hills. But, while they raved,  
the fowl

Was laid before them, luscious, fragrant,  
brown.

He pointed, speechless, to the gathering  
dusk,

And poured their wine, and conquered.

“ The Bon Dieu  
Who made the sensual part of man be  
praised,”  
He said to his wife ; “ for if He had made  
a world  
Of pure philosophers, every tavern in  
France  
Might close its shutters, and take down its  
sign.”

So Jean Guettard and Malesherbes stayed  
and supped ;  
And, ere they slept, being restless, they  
went out  
And rambled through the sombre streets  
again.  
They passed that haunted palace of  
Auvergne,  
Brooding on its wild memories and grim  
birth ;  
And from the Sainte Chapelle, uplifting all  
That monstrous darkness in one lean black  
spire



To heaven, they heard an organ muttering  
    low  
As though the stones once more were  
    stirred to life  
By the deep soul within. Then, arched  
    and tall,  
In the sheer blackness of that lava, shone  
One rich stained window, where the Mother  
    stood,  
In gold and blue and crimson, with the  
    Child.  
They looked at it as men who see the life  
And light of heaven through the Plutonian  
    walls  
Of this material universe. They heard  
The young-voiced choir, in silver-throated  
    peals,  
Filling the night with ecstasy. They stood  
Bareheaded in the dark deserted street,  
Outcasts from all that innocence within,  
And silent; till the last celestial cry,  
Like one great flight of angels, ebbed away.

## III.

## THE SHADOW OF PASCAL.

AT daybreak they pressed on. Strange  
hills arose

Clustering before them, hills whose frag-  
rant turf,

Softer than velvet, hid what savage hearts !

At noon they saw, beside the road, a gash  
Rending the sunlit skin of that green  
peace ;

An old abandoned quarry, half overgrown  
With ferns, and masked by boughs.

They left the road  
And looked at it. Volcanic rock ! A flood  
Of frozen lava !

They marked its glossy blackness, the  
rough cords

And wrinkles where, as the fiery waves  
    congealed,  
It had crept on a little ; and strangely there  
New beauty, like the smile on truth's hard  
    face,  
Gleamed on them. Never did bracken and  
    hart's tongue ferns  
Whisper a tale like those whose dauntless  
    roots  
Were creviced in that grim rock. They  
    tracked it up  
Through heather and thyme. They saw  
    what human eyes  
Had seen for ages, yet had never seen,—  
The tall green hill, a great truncated cone,  
Robed in wild summer and haunted by the  
    bee,  
But shaped like grey engravings that they  
    knew  
Of Etna and Vesuvius.

Near its crest

They saw the sunlight on a shepherd's  
    crook,

Bright as a star. A flock of nibbling sheep  
Flowed round it like a cloud, a rambling  
cloud

With drifting edges that broke and formed  
again

Before one small black barking speck that  
flew

Swift as a bird about a cloud in heaven.

Thyme underfoot, wild honey in the thyme ;  
But, under the thyme and honey, if eyes  
could see,

In every runnel and crevice and slip and  
patch,

A powdery rubble of pumice, black and red,  
Flakes of cooled lava and stones congealed  
from fire.

It was no dream. A butterfly spread its  
fans

White, veined with green, on a rock of sun-  
lit slag,

Slag of the seething furnaces below.

They reached the summit ; and, under  
them, beheld

The hollow cup, the crater, whence that  
flood

Out of the dreadful molten heart of the  
earth

Poured in red fury to create Auvergne.

But now, instead of smoke and fire, they saw

Red of the heather in that deep grassy  
hollow,

And heard, instead of the hissing of the  
abyss,

The small grey locust, stridulant in the sun.

They came to Clermont. All its dark old  
streets

Were built of lava. By the *Place de Jaude*,

O, strangely in their own swift race for  
truth,

They met the phantom of an earlier fire !

They found the house where Pascal first  
beheld

The sunlight, through a window in lava-  
stone ;

And many a time had passed, a brooding  
child,

With all his deep celestial thoughts to come,  
Through that volcanic porch, but never saw  
The wonder of the walls wherein he slept.  
They saw, through mists, as I through mists  
discerned

Their own strange drama, that scene  
within the scene.

They climbed the very hill that Pascal made  
A beacon-height of truth—the Puy de  
Dôme,

Where Florin Périer, at his bidding, took  
His tubes of soft quicksilver ; and, at the  
base,

And, at the summit, tested, proved, and  
weighed

The pressure of that lovely body of light,  
Our globe-engirdling air. On one swift hint,  
One flash of truth that Torricelli caught  
From Galileo, and Pascal caught in turn,  
He weighed that glory.

Ever the drama grew.

The vital fire, in yet more intricate ways  
(As life itself, enkindling point by point

In the dark formless embryo, grows to  
power),

Coursed on, from mind to mind, each work-  
ing out

Its separate purpose, yet all linked in one.  
For those two pilgrims, on the cone-shaped  
hill

That Pascal knew, and yet had never  
known,

Met his great spirit among the scoriac  
flakes,

And found themselves, in vision, on that  
pure height

Where all the paths to truth shall one day  
meet.

They met his brooding spirit as they  
climbed.

They passed the dead man's words from  
mouth to mouth,

With new significance, deeper and more  
strange

Even than they knew. “ *We are on fire to  
explore*

*The universe, and build our tower of truth  
Into the Infinite. Then the firm earth laughs,  
Opens, under its cracked walls, an abyss.”—  
Lavoisier ! Malesherbes ! Friends of Jean  
Guettard.*

*Was it only the whisper of Shadow-of-a-Leaf  
that showed me  
Gleams of the Terror approaching, a wild  
storm  
Of fiercer, hell-hot lava, and that far sound  
Of tumbrils. . . . The Republic has no need  
Of savants !*

*This dream went by, with the  
dead man’s words.*

*They reached the highest crest. Before  
their eyes  
The hill-scape opened like a mighty vision  
That, quietly, has come true.*

*They stood there, dumb,  
To see what they foresaw, the invisible  
thought  
Grown firm as granite ; for, as a man  
might die*



In faith, yet wake amazed in his new world,  
They saw those chains of dead volcanoes  
rise,

Cone behind cone, with green truncated  
crowns,

And smokeless craters, on the dazzling  
blue.

There, in the very sunlit heart of France,  
They saw what human eyes had daily seen  
Yet never seen till now. They stood and  
gazed,

More lonely in that loneliness of thought  
Than wingéd men, alighting on the moon.

Old as the moon's own craters were those  
hills ;

And all their wrath had cooled so long ago  
That as the explorers on their downward  
path

Passed by a cup-shaped crater, smooth and  
green,

Three hundred feet in depth and breadth,  
they saw,

Within it, an old shepherd and his flock  
Quietly wandering over its gentle slopes  
Of short sweet grass, through clumps of  
saffron broom.

They asked him by what name that hill  
was known.

He answered, *The Hen's Nest !*

“ Hen's Nest,” cried Jean Guettard, “ the  
good God grant

This fowl be not a phoenix and renew  
Its feathers in Auvergne.”

They chuckled aloud,  
And left the shepherd wondering, many a  
day,

What secret knowledge in the stranger's eye  
Cast that uncanny light upon the hill,  
A moment, and no more ; and yet enough  
To make him feel, even when the north  
wind blew,

Less at his ease in that green windless cup ;  
And, once or twice, although he knew not  
why,

He turned, and drove his flock another way.

## IV.

## AT PARIS.

“ FEW know the name of Jean Guettard  
to-day,”

Said Shadow-of-a-Leaf ; for now the mists  
concealed

All that clear vision. “ I often visited him,  
Between the lights, in after years. He  
lived

Alone at Paris then, in two lean rooms,  
A sad old prisoner, at the Palais Royal ;  
And many a time, beside a dying fire,  
We talked together. I was only a shadow,  
A creature flickering on the fire-lit wall ;  
But, while he bowed his head upon his  
hands

And gazed into the flame with misted eyes,  
I could steal nearer and whisper time away.

And sometimes he would breathe his  
thoughts aloud ;  
And when at night his faithful servant,  
Claire,  
Stole into the room to lay his frugal meal,  
She'd glance at him with big brown  
troubled eyes  
To find him talking to himself alone.

And sometimes when the masters of the  
hour  
Won easy victories in the light world's  
fashion,  
With fables, easily spun in light quick  
minds,  
He'd leave the Academy thundering its  
applause,  
And there, in his bare room, with none to see  
But Shadow-of-a-Leaf, he would unfold  
again  
—Smiling a little grimly to himself—  
Those curious beautiful tinted maps he  
drew,

The very first that any man had made  
To show, beneath the kingdoms made by  
man,

The truth, that hidden structure, ribbed  
with rock,

And track the vanished ages by the lives  
And deaths imprinted there.

They had made him rich  
In nothing but the truth.

He had mapped the rocks.  
“The time is not yet come,” he used to  
say,

“When we can clothe them with a radiant  
Spring

Of happy meanings. I have never made  
A theory. That’s for happier men to  
come ;

It will be time to answer the great riddle  
When we have read the question.

Here and there  
Already, I note, they use this work of mine  
And shuffle the old forerunner out of  
sight.

No matter. Let the truth live. I shall  
watch

Its progress, proudly, from the outer dark ;  
More happily, I believe, thus free from  
self,

Than if my soul went whoring after fame.  
One thing alone I'll claim. It is not good  
To let all lies go dancing by on flowers.  
This—what's his name ?—who claims to  
be the first

To find a dead volcano in Auvergne,  
And sees, in that, only an easy road  
To glory for himself, shall find, ere long,  
One live volcano in old Jean Guettard.  
The fool has forced me to it ; for he thinks  
That I'll claim nothing. I prefer my peace ;  
But truth compels me here. I'll set my  
heel

On him, at least. Malesherbes will bear me  
out.

As for the rest—no theory of the earth  
Can live without these rock-ribbed facts  
of mine,

The facts that I first mapped, I claim no  
more.

These rocks, these bones, these fossil ferns  
and shells,

Of which the grinning moon-calf makes a  
jest,

A byword for all dotage and decay,  
Shall yet be touched with beauty, and  
reveal

The secrets of the book of earth to man.”

“ He made no theory,” whispered Shadow-  
of-a-Leaf,

“ And yet, I think, he looked on all these  
things

Devoutly ; on a sea-shell turned to stone  
As on a sacred relic, at whose touch  
Time opened like a gate, and let him pass  
Out of this mocking and ephemeral world  
Through the eternal ages, home to God.

And so I watched him, growing old and  
grey,

In seeking truth ; a man with enemies,  
Ten enemies for every truth he told ;  
And friends that still, despite his caustic  
tongue,  
Loved him for his true heart.

Yet even these  
Never quite reached it ; never quite dis-  
cerned  
That even his gruffest words were but the  
pledge  
Of his own passionate truth ; the harsh  
pained cry  
For truth, for truth, of one who saw the  
throng  
Bewildered and astray, the ways of love  
Grown tortuous, and the path to heaven  
grown dim  
Through man's unheed for truth.

I saw him greet  
Condorcet, at the Academy. " We have  
lost  
Two members. I condole with you, my  
friend.



It is their last *éloges* you'll speak to-day !  
How will you bury their false theories ?  
In irony, or in academic robes ?  
No matter. There'll be only one or two  
Who really know ; and I shall not be there  
To vex you, from my corner, with one  
    smile.

Lord, what a pack of lies you'll have to tell !  
It is the custom. When my turn arrives—  
'Twill not be long,—remember, please, I  
    want

Truth, the whole truth, or nothing."

I saw one night

A member walking home with him—to  
    thank him  
For his support that morning. Jean  
    Guettard  
Turned on his threshold, growling like a  
    bear.

" You owe me nothing. I believed my vote  
Was right, or else you never should have  
    had it.

Pray do not think I liked you."

A grim door  
Opened and closed like iron in the face  
Of his late friend and now indignant foe ;  
To whom no less, if he had needed it,  
Guettard would still have given his own  
last sou.

He came into his lonely room that night,  
And sat and stared into the fluttering fire.  
I, Shadow-of-a-Leaf, was there ; and I  
could see  
More in his eyes than even Condorcet saw,  
Condorcet, who of all his friends remained  
Most faithful to the end.

But, at the hour  
When Claire would lay his supper, a light  
hand tapped  
Timidly on his door. He sat upright  
And turned with startled eyes.

“ Enter,” he called.  
A wide-eyed, pale-faced child came creeping in.

“ What ! Little Claire ! ” he cried.

“ Your mother is not better ! ”

She stood before him,  
The fire-light faintly colouring her thin  
face,—

“ M’sieur, she is very ill. You are a doctor.  
Come, quickly.”

Through the narrow, ill-lighted streets  
Old Jean Guettard went hobbling, a small  
hand

Clutching his own, and two small wooden  
shoes

Clattering beside him, till the child began  
To droop. He lifted her gently in his arms  
And hobbled on. The thin, white, tear-  
stained face,

Pressing against his old grey-bristled cheek,  
Directed him, now to left and now to right.

“ O, quick, M’sieur ! ” Then, into an  
alley, dark

As pitch, they plunged. The third door on  
the right !

Into the small sad house they went, and  
saw

By the faint guttering candle-light—the  
mother,  
Shivering and burning on her tattered bed.  
Two smaller children knelt on either side  
Worn out with fear and weeping.

All that night

Guettard, of all true kings of science then,  
Obscure, yet first in France and all the  
world,  
Watched, laboured, bathed the brow and  
raised the head,  
Moistened the thirsting lips, and knew it  
vain ;  
Knew, as I knew, that in a hundred years  
Knowledge might conquer this ; but he  
must fight  
A losing battle, and fight it in the dark  
No better armed than Galen.

He closed her eyes  
At dawn. He took the children to his  
house ;  
Prayed with them ; dried their tears ;  
and, while they slept,

Shed tears himself, remembering—a green  
    hill,  
A Rock against the sky.

He cared for them, as though they were  
    his own.

Guettard, the founder of two worlds of  
    thought,

Taught them their letters. “None can  
    tell,” he said,

“What harvests are enfolded for the world  
In one small grain of this immortal wheat.  
But I, who owe so much to little things  
In childhood ; and have seen, among the  
    rocks,

What vast results may wait upon the path  
Of one blind life, under a vanished sea,  
Bow down in awe before this human life.”

## V.

## THE RETURN.

EVER, as he grew older, life became  
More sacred to him.

“ In a thousand years  
Man will look back with horror on this  
world

Where men could babble about the Lamb  
of God,

Then turn and kill for food one living thing  
That looks through two great eyes, so like  
their own.

I have had living creatures killed for me ;  
But I will have no more.”

Though Nature laughed  
His mood to scorn, said Shadow-of-a-Leaf,  
the day

Will come (I have seen it come a myriad  
times)

When, through one mood like this, Nature  
will climb

Out of its nature, and make all things new.  
Who prophesied cities, when the first  
blind life

Crawled from the sea, to breathe that  
strange bright air,

And conquer its own past ?

“ I have no theory of this wild strange  
world,”

Said Jean Guettard,

“ But, if the God that made it dies with us  
Into immortal life. . . .”

“ There, there’s the meaning,” whispered  
Shadow-of-a-Leaf,

“ Could we but grasp it. There’s the  
harmony

Of life, and death, and all our mortal pain.”  
I heard that old man whispering in the  
dark,

“ O, little human life, so lost to sight

Among the eternal ages, I, at least,  
Find in this very darkness the one Fact  
That bows my soul before you."

Once again  
The mists began to roll away like smoke.  
I saw a patch of vines upon the hill  
Above Étampes ; and through the mists I  
saw  
Old Jean Guettard, with snowy wind-  
blown hair,  
Nearing the shrouded summit. As he  
climbed,  
Slowly the last thin veils dissolved away.  
He lifted up his eyes to see the Rock.  
The hill was bare. His facts were well  
confirmed.  
Sun, wind, and rain, and the sharp chisels  
of frost  
Had broken it down. The Rock was on  
its way  
In brook and river, with all the drifting  
hills,



And all his life, to the remembering sea.  
He looked around him, furtively. None  
was near.

Down, on his knees,  
Among the weather-worn shards of his lost  
youth,  
Dropt Jean Guettard.

The mist closed over him.  
The world dissolved away. The vision  
died,  
Leaving me only a voice within the heart,  
Far off, yet near, the whisper of Shadow-  
of-a-Leaf.

*The rain had beaten. The wind had blown.  
The hill was bare as the sky that day.  
Mother and Child from the height had gone.  
The wind and rain, said Jean Guettard,  
Had crumbled even the Rock away.*

## VI.—IN SWEDEN.

### LINNÆUS.

It was his garden that began it all,  
A magical garden for a changeling child.

“ The garden has bewitched him !  
Carl ! Carl ! O, Carl ! Now where is  
that elfkin hiding ? ”

It was the voice of Christina, wife of the  
Pastor,  
Nils Linnæus, the Man of the Linden-tree.  
Youthful and comely, she stood at her  
door in the twilight,  
Calling her truant son.

Her flaxen hair  
Kerchiefed with crisp white wings ; her  
    rose-coloured apron  
And blue-grey gown, like a harebell,  
    yielding a glimpse  
Of the shapeliest ankle and snowiest stock-  
    ing in Sweden.  
She stood at her door, a picture breathed  
    upon air.

She called yet again, and tilted her head  
    to listen  
As a faint, flushed, wild anemone turning  
    aside  
From a breeze out of elf land, teasing her  
    delicate petals,  
The breeze of the warm, white, green-veined  
    wings of her wooer ;  
And again, a little more troubled at heart,  
    she called,  
“ Supper-time, Carl ! ”

But out of the fragrant pinewoods  
Darkening round her, only the wood-  
    pigeon cooed.

Down by the lake, from the alders, only  
the red-cap  
Whistled three notes. Then all grew quiet  
again.

Yet, he was there, she knew, though he  
did not answer.

The lad was at hand, she knew, though  
she could not see him.

Her elf-child, nine years old, was about  
and around her,

A queer little presence, invisible, every-  
where, nowhere,

Hiding, intensely still. . . .

She listened ; the leaves  
All whispered, " hush."

It was just as though Carl had whispered,  
" Hush ! I am watching.

" Hush ! I am thinking.

" Hush ! I am listening, too."

She tiptoed through the garden, her fair  
head

Turning to left and right, with birdlike  
glances,

Peeping round lichened boulders and  
clumps of fern.

She passed by the little garden his father  
gave him,

Elfdom within an elfdom, where he had  
sown

Not only flowers that rightly grow in  
gardens,

The delicate aristocracies of bloom,

But hedgerow waifs and ragamuffin strays

That sprawled across his borders every-  
where

And troubled even the queendom of the rose  
With swarming insurrections.

At last she saw him,

His tousled head a little golden cloud

Among the dark green reeds at the edge  
of the lake,

Bending over the breathless water to  
watch—

What ?

She tiptoed nearer, until she saw  
The spell that bound him. Floating upon  
the lake,  
A yard away, a water-lily closed  
Its petals, as an elfin cygnet smoothes  
Its ruffled plumes, composing them for  
sleep.

He watched it, rapt, intent.

She watched her son,  
Intent and rapt, with a stirring at her  
heart,  
And beautiful shining wonder in her eyes,  
Feeling a mystery near her.

Shadow-of-a-Leaf  
Whispered. The garden died into the dark.  
Mother and child had gone—I knew not  
whither.

It seemed as though the dark stream of  
the years  
Flowed round me.

Then, as one that walks all night  
Lifts up his head in the early light of dawn,

I found myself in a long deserted street  
Of little wooden houses, with thatched  
    roofs.

It was Uppsala.

                    Over the silent town  
I heard a skylark quivering, up and up,  
As though the very dew from its wild  
    wings  
Were shaken to silvery trills of elfin song.  
*Tirile, tirile, tirile*, it arose,  
Praising the Giver of one more shining  
    day.

Then, with a clatter of doors and a yodelling  
    call  
Of young men's voices, the Svartbäcken  
    woke ;  
And down the ringing street the students  
    came  
In loose blue linen suits, knapsack on  
    back  
And sturdy stick in hand, to rouse old  
    Carl

For their long ramble through the blossoming fields.

I saw them clustering round the Master's door.

I heard their jolly song—*Papa Linnæus* :

Linnæus, Papa Linnæus,

He gave his pipe a rap.

He donned his gown of crimson.

He donned his green fur-cap.

He walked in a meadow at daybreak

To see what he might see ;

And the linnet cried, “ Linnæus !

O hide ! Here comes Linnæus.

Beware of old Linnæus,

The Man of the Linden-tree.”

So beautiful, bright and early

He brushed away the dews

He found the wicked wild-flowers

All courting there in twos ;

And buzzing loud for pardon,

Sir Pandarus, the bee :



“ Vincit Amor, Linnæus,  
Linnæus, Papa Linnæus ! ”  
O, ho, quoth old Linnæus,  
The Man of the Linden-tree.

Quoth he, 'Tis my conviction  
These innocents must be wed !  
So he murmured a benediction,  
And blessed their fragrant bed ;  
And the butterflies fanned their blushes,  
And the red-cap whistled in glee,  
*They are married by old Linnæus,*  
*Linnæus, Papa Linnæus !*  
*Vivat, vivat Linnæus,*  
*The Man of the Linden-tree.*

*Vivat Linnæus !* And out the old Master  
came,  
Jauntily as a throstle-cock in Spring,  
His big bright eyes aglow ; the fine curved  
beak,  
The kindly lips, the broad well-sculptured  
brow,

All looked as though the wisdom that had  
shaped them

Desired that they should always wear a  
smile

To teach the world that kindness makes  
men happy.

He shook his head at his uproarious troop,  
And chose his officers for the day's cam-  
paign :

One, for a marksman, with a fowling-piece,  
To bring down bird or beast, if need arose ;  
One for a bugler, to recall their lines  
From echoing valley and hill, when some-  
thing rare

Lay in the Master's hand ; one to make  
notes

Of new discoveries ; one for discipline ; all  
For seeking out the truth, in youth and  
joy.

To-day they made for Jumkil, miles away  
Along the singing river, where that prize  
The *Sceptrum Carolinum* used to grow.

And, ever as they went, Linnæus touched

All that they saw with gleams of new  
delight.

As when the sun first rises over the sea  
Myriads of ripples wear a crest of fire ;  
And over all the hills a myriad flowers  
Lift each a cup of dew that burns like  
wine ;

And all these gleams reflect one heavenly  
light ;

He changed the world around him ; filled  
the woods

With rapture ; made each footpath wind  
away

Into new depths of elfin-land. The ferns  
Became its whispering fringe ; and every  
stile

A faerie bridge into a lovelier world.

His magic sunlight touched the adventur-  
ous plants

That grew on the thatch of wayside cot-  
tages,

*Crepis* and *Bromus*, with the straggling  
brood

Of flowers he called *tectorum*, dancing there  
Above the heads of mortals, like swart  
    gnomes  
In rusty red and gold.

    “ My Svartbäck Latin,”  
Linnæus laughed, “ may make the pedants  
    writhe ;  
But I would sooner take three slaps from  
    Priscian  
Than one from Mother Nature.”

    Ancient books  
Had made their pretty pattern of the  
    world.  
They had named and labelled all their  
    flowers by rote,  
Grouping them in a little man-made scheme  
Empty of true significance as the wheel  
Of stars that Egypt turned for her dead  
    kings.  
His was the very life-stream of the flowers ;  
And everywhere in Nature he revealed  
Their subtle kinships ; wedded bloom and  
    bloom ;

Traced the proud beauty, flaunting in her  
garden,  
To gipsy grandsires, camping in a ditch ;  
Linked the forgotten wanderers to their  
clan ;  
Grouped many-coloured clans in one great  
tribe ;  
And gathered scores of scattered tribes  
again  
Into one radiant nation.

He revealed  
Mysterious clues to changes wild as those  
That Ovid sang—the dust that rose to a  
stem,  
The stem that changed to a leaf, the crown-  
ing leaf  
That changed to a fruitful flower ; and,  
under all,  
Sustaining, moving, binding all in one,  
One Power that like a Master-Dramatist,  
Through every act and atom of the world  
Advanced the triumph that must crown  
the whole.

Unseen by man—that drama—here on  
earth

It must be ; but could man survey the  
whole,

As even now, in flashes, he discerns  
Its gleaming moments, vanishing sharp-  
etched scenes

Loaded with strange significance, he would  
know,

Like Shadow-of-a-Leaf, that not a cloud  
can sail

Across a summer sky, but plays its part.  
There's not a shadow drifting on the hills,  
Or stain of colour where the sun goes down,  
Or least bright flake upon the hawk-moth's  
wing

But that great drama needs them.

The wild thrush,

The falling petal, the bubble upon the  
brook,

Each has its cue, to sing, to fall, to shine,  
And exquisitely responds. The drunken  
bee

Blundering and stumbling through a world  
of flowers

Has his own tingling entrances, unknown  
To man or to himself ; and, though he  
lives

In his own bee-world, following his own  
law,

He is yet the unweeting shuttle in a loom  
That marries rose to rose in other worlds,  
And shapes the wonder of Springs he  
cannot see.

O, little bee-like man, thou shalt not raise  
Thy hand, or close thine eyes, or sigh in  
sleep ;

But, over all thy freedom, there abides  
The law of this world-drama.

Under the stars,  
Between sweet-breathing gardens in the  
dusk,

I heard the song of the students marching  
home.

I saw their eyes, mad nightingales of joy,  
Shining with youth's eternal ecstasy.

I saw them tossing vines entwined with  
flowers  
Over girls' necks, and drawing them all  
along ;  
Flags flying, French horns blowing, kettle-  
drums throbbing,  
And Carl Linnæus marching at their head.  
Up to the great old barn they marched for  
supper,—  
Four rounds of beef and a cask of ripened  
ale ;  
And, afterwards, each with his own flower-  
fettered girl,  
They'd dance the rest of the summer  
night away.

Greybeards had frowned upon this frolic  
feast ;  
But Carl Linnæus told them " Youth's a  
flower,  
And we're botanic students."

Many a time,  
In green fur-cap and crimson dressing-gown,



He sat and smoked his pipe and watched  
them there

On winter nights ; and when the fiddles  
played

His Polish dance, Linné would shuffle it too.

But now, to-night—they had tramped too  
many miles.

The old man was tired. He left them at  
the door,

And turned to his own house, as one who  
leaves

Much that he loved behind him.

As he went

They cheered their chief—" Vivat, vivat,  
Linnæus ! "

And broke into their frolic song again.

I saw him in the shadowy house alone

Entering the room, above whose happy  
door

The watchword of his youth and his old age

Was written in gold—*Innocue vivito.*

*Numen adest.*

I saw him writing there  
His last great joyous testament, to be read  
Only by his own children, as he thought,  
After he'd gone ; an ecstasy of praise,  
As though a bird were singing in his mind,  
Praise, praise, to the Giver of life and love  
and death !

*God led him with His own Almighty Hand,  
And made him grow up like a goodly tree.  
God filled his heart with such a loving fire  
For truth, that truth returned him love for  
love.*

*God aided him, with all that his own age  
Had yet brought forth, to speed him on his  
way.*

*God set him in a garden, as of old,  
And gave him, for his duty and delight,  
The task that he loved best in all the world.  
God gave him for his help-mate, from his  
youth*

*Into old age, the wife he most desired.  
And blessed him with her goodness.*

*God revealed*  
*His secrets to him ; touched his eyes with light*  
*And let him gaze into His Council Hall.*  
*God so determined even his defeats*  
*That they became his greatest victories.*  
*God made his enemies as a wind to fill*  
*His homeward-rushing sails. Wherever he*  
*went*  
*The Lord was with him, and the Lord upheld*  
*him.*

And yet, O yet, one glory was to come ;  
One strangest gate into infinitude  
Was yet to be swung back and take him  
home.

*I know not how the fields that gave us birth*  
*Draw us with sweetness, never to be forgotten*  
*Back through the dark.*

I saw him groping out,  
As through a mist, into a shadowy garden ;  
And this was not Uppsala any more,  
But the lost garden where his boyhood  
reigned.

The little dwindling path at Journey's  
End  
Ran through the dark, into a path he  
knew.

*Carl! Carl! Carl! Now where is that  
elfkin hiding!*  
Down by the lake, from the alders, only  
the red-cap  
Whistled three notes. Then all grew quiet  
again.

*Carl! O Carl!* Her voice, though he  
could not answer,  
Called him. He knew she was there,  
though he could not see her.  
He stood and listened. The leaves were  
listening, too.

He tiptoed through the garden. His grey  
head  
Turning to left and right with birdlike  
glances.

He passed by the little garden his father  
gave him.

He knew its breath in the night.

His heart stood still.

She was there. He saw her at last. Her  
back was towards him.

He saw her fair young head, through the  
deepening shadows,

Bending, breathlessly, forward to watch a  
child

At the edge of the lake, who watched a  
floating flower.

He watched her, rapt, intent. She watched  
her son,

Intent and rapt.

Tears in his heart, he waited, dark and  
still,

Feeling a mystery near him.

## VII,—LAMARCK AND THE REVOLUTION.

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### I.

#### LAMARCK AND BUFFON.

WHAT wars are these ? Far off, a bugle  
blew.

Out of oblivion rose the vanished world.

I stood in Amiens, in a narrow street

Outside a dark old college. I saw a boy,

A budding Abbé, pallid from his books,

Beaked like a Roman eagle. He stole  
out

Between grim gates ; and stripping off his  
bands,

Hastened away, a distance in his eyes ;

As though, through an earthly bugle, he  
    had heard

A deeper bugle, summoning to a war  
Beyond these wars, with enemies yet un-  
    known.

I saw him bargaining for a starveling  
    horse

In Picardy and riding to the North,  
Over chalk downs, through fields of popped  
    wheat.

A tattered farm lad, sixteen years of  
    age,

Followed like Sancho at his master's heel.

Up to the flaming battle-front he rode.

Flinging a stubborn "no" at those who'd  
    send him

Back to learn war among the raw recruits,  
He took his place before the astonished  
    ranks

Of grenadiers, and faced the enemy's fire.

Death swooped upon them, tearing long  
    red lanes

Through their massed squadrons. His  
commander fell  
Beside him. One by one his officers died.  
Death placed him in command. The  
shattered troops  
Of Beaujolais were wavering everywhere.  
“Retreat!” the cry began. In smoke  
and fire,  
Lamarck, with fourteen grenadiers, held on.  
“This is the post assigned. This post we  
hold  
Till Life or Death relieve us.”

Who assigned it ?  
Who summoned him thither ? And when  
Peace returned  
Was it blind chance that garrisoned La-  
marck  
Among the radiant gardens of the South,  
Dazzled him with their beauty, and then  
slipt  
That volume of Chomel into his hand,  
*Traité des Plantes ?*



Was it blind accident,  
Environment—O, mighty word that masks  
The innumerable potencies of God,—  
When his own comrade, in wild horse-play,  
wrenched

And crippled him in body, and he returned  
Discharged to Paris, free to take up arms  
In an immortal army ? Was it chance  
That lodged him there, despite his own  
desire,

So high above the streets that all he saw  
Out of his window was the drifting clouds  
Flowing and changing, drawing his lonely  
mind

In subtle ways to Nature's pageantry,  
And the great golden laws that governed  
all ?

Was it blind chance that drew him out  
to watch

The sunset clouds o'er Mont Valérien,  
Where the same power, for the same pur-  
pose, drew

Jean Jacques Rousseau ?    Flowers and  
the dying clouds  
Drew them together, and mind from mind  
caught fire ?

What universal Power through all and each  
Was labouring to create when first they met  
And talked and wondered, whether the  
forms of life  
Through earth's innumerable ages changed?  
Were species constant ?    Let the rose run  
wild,  
How swiftly it returns into the briar !  
Transplant the southern wilding to the  
north  
And it will change, to suit the harsher sky.  
Nourish it in a garden,—you shall see  
The trailer of the hedgerow stand upright,  
And every blossom with a threefold crown.

Buffon, upon his hill-top at Montbard  
In his red turret, among his flowers and  
birds,

Gazing through all his epochs of the world,  
Had guessed at a long ancestry for man,  
Too long for the upstart kings.

He could not prove it ;  
And the Sorbonne, with *Genesis* in its hand,  
Had frowned upon his æons. *In six days*  
*God made the heaven and earth.*

He had withdrawn,  
Smiling as wise men smile at children's  
talk ;

And when Lamarck had visited him alone,  
He smiled again, a little ironically.

“ Six epochs of the world may mean six  
days ;

But then, my friend, six days must also  
mean

Six epochs. Call it compromise, or peace.  
They cannot claim the victory.

There are some  
Think me too—orthodox. O, I know the  
whine

That fools will raise hereafter. Buffon  
quailed ;

Why did not Buffon, like our noble selves,  
Wear a vicarious halo of martyrdom ?  
Strange—that desire of small sadistic eyes  
At ease on the shore to watch a ship-  
wrecked man

Drowning. Lucretius praised that barbarous  
pleasure.

Mine is a subtler savagery. I prefer  
To watch, from a little hill above their  
world,

The foes of science, floundering in the  
waves

Of their new compromise. Every crooked  
flash

Of irony lightening their dark skies to-day  
Shows them more wickedly buffeted, in  
a sea

Of wilder contradictions.

I had no proof.

Time was not ripe. The scripture of the  
rocks

Must first be read more deeply. But the  
law

Pointed to one conclusion everywhere,  
That forms of flesh and bone, in the long  
    lapse  
Of time, were plastic as the sculptor's clay,  
And born of earlier forms.

                                Under man's eyes,  
Had not the forms of bird and beast been  
    changed  
Into new species? Children of the wolf,  
Greyhound and mastiff, in their several  
    kinds,  
Fawned on his children, slept upon his  
    hearth.

The spaniel and the bloodhound owned  
    one sire.

Man's own selective artistry had shaped  
New flowers, confirmed the morning glory's  
    crown,

And out of the wild briar evoked the  
    rose.

Like a magician, in a few brief years,  
He had changed the forms and colours of  
    his birds.

He had whistled the wild pigeons from the  
    rocks  
And by his choice, and nature's own deep  
    law  
Evoked the rustling fan-tails that displayed  
Their splendours on his cottage roof, or  
    bowed  
Like courtiers on his lawn. The pouter  
    swelled  
A rainbow breast to please him. Tumblers  
    played  
Their tricks as for a king. The carrier flew  
From the spy's window, or the soldiers'  
    camp,  
The schoolboy's cage, the lover's latticed  
    heart,  
And bore his messages over turbulent seas  
And snow-capt mountains, with a sinewy  
    wing  
That raced the falcon, beating stroke for  
    stroke."

## II.

LAMARCK, LAVOISIER, AND  
NINETY-THREE.

So, seizing the pure fire from Buffon's  
hand,  
Lamarck pressed on, flinging all else aside,  
To follow all those clues to his own end.  
Ten years he spent among the flowers of  
France,  
Unravelling, and more truly than Linné,  
The natural orders of their tangled clans ;  
Then, in " six months of unremitting toil,"  
As Cuvier subtly sneered, he wrote his  
book,  
The *Flore Francaise* ; compact, as Cuvier  
knew,  
And did not care to say, with ten years'  
thought.

But Buffon did not sneer. The great old  
man,

A king of men, enthroned there at Mont-  
bard,

Aided Lamarck as Jove might aid his son.  
He sent the book to the king's own printing  
press.

Daubenton wrote his foreword ; and  
Rousseau

Had long prepared the way.

“Linné of France,”

The stream of praise through every salon  
flowed.

*Une science à la mode*, great Cuvier sneered.

Was it blind chance that crushed Lamarck  
again

## Back to his lean-ribbed poverty ?

Buffon died.

Lamarck, who had married in his prosperous hour,

Had five young mouths to feed. With ten  
long years



Of toil he had made the great *Jardin*  
*du Roi*

Illustrious through the world. As his  
reward

The ministers of the king now granted him  
A keepership at one thousand francs a  
year ;

And, over him, in Buffon's place, they set  
The exquisite dilettante, Bernardin  
Saint Pierre, a delicate twitcher of silken  
strings.

Lamarck held grimly to the post assigned.  
Under that glittering rose-pink world he  
heard

Titanic powers upsurging from the abyss.  
Then, in the blood-red dawn of ninety-  
three,

The bright crust cracked. The furious  
lava rolled

Through Paris, and a thundercloud of  
doom

Pealed over thrones and peoples. Flash  
on flash,

Blind lightnings of the guillotine replied.

Blind throats around the headsman's  
basket roared.

The slippery cobbles were greased with  
human blood.

The torch was at the gates of the Bastille.  
Old towers, old creeds, old wrongs, at a  
Mænad shout,

Went up in smoke and flame. Earth's  
dynasties

Rocked to their dark foundations. Tyrants  
died ;

But in that madness of the human soul  
They did not die alone. Innocence died ;  
And pity died ; and those whose hands  
upheld

The torch of knowledge died in the bestial  
storm.

Lavoisier had escaped. They lured him back  
Into the Terror's hot red tiger-mouth,  
Promising, " Face your trial with these  
your friends,

And all will be set free. If not, they die."  
He faced it, and returned. The guillotine  
Flashed down on one and all.

Let the wide earth,  
Still echoing its old wrath against the kings  
And priests who exiled, stoned and burned  
and starved

The bearers of the fire, remember well  
How the Republic in its red right hand  
Held up Lavoisier's head, and told man-  
kind

In mockery, colder than the cynical snarl  
Of Nero, "The Republic has no need  
Of savants. Let the people's will be done  
On earth, and let the headless trunk of  
Truth

Be trampled down by numbers. Tread in  
the mire

All excellence and all skill. Daub your  
raw wounds

With dirt of the street; elect the sick to  
health.

It is the people's will, and they shall live.  
Nay, crown the eternal Power who rules  
by law

With this red cap of your capricious will,

And ye shall hear His everlasting voice  
More clearly than ye heard it when He  
spoke  
In stillness, through the souls of lonely  
men,  
On starry heights. Lift up your heads  
and hear  
His voice in the whirling multitude's wild-  
beast roar,  
*Not these men, but Barabbas."*

Must the mind  
Turn back to tyranny, then, and trust  
    anew  
To harnessed might? The listening soul  
    still heard  
A more imperative call. Though Evil wore  
A myriad masks and reigned as wickedly  
In peoples as in kings, Truth, Truth alone,  
Whether upheld by many or by few,  
Wore the one absolute crown. Though  
    Pilate flung  
His murderous jest at Truth—the law re-  
    mained

That answered his dark question ; man's  
one clue,

The law that all true seekers after Truth  
Hold in their hands ; the law, a golden  
thread

That, loyally followed, leads them to full  
light,

Each by his own dark way, till all the  
world

Is knit together in harmony that sets free.  
Bridge-builders of the universe, they fling  
Their firm and shining roads from star to  
star,

From earth to heaven. At his appointed  
task,

Lamarck held grimly on (as once he  
gripped

His wavering grenadiers) till Life or Death  
Relieved him. But he knew his cause at  
last.

*Jardin du Roi* became *Jardin des Plantes* ;  
And the red tumult surging round his walls  
Died to a whisper of leaves.

His mind groped back,  
Back through the inconceivable ages now,  
To terrible revolutions of the globe,  
Huge catastrophic rendings of the hills,  
Red floods of lava ; cataracts of fire ;  
Monstrous upheavals of the nethermost  
    deep ;  
Whereby as Cuvier painted them, in hues  
Of blind disaster, all the hosts of life  
In each æonian period, like a swarm  
Of ants beneath the wheels of Juggernaut,  
Were utterly abolished.

Did God create  
After each earth-disaster, then, new hosts  
Of life to range her mountains and her  
    seas ;  
New forms, new patterns, fresh from His  
    careless Hand,  
Yet all so closely akin to those destroyed ?  
Or did this life-stream, from one fountain-  
    head,  
Through the long changes of unnumbered  
    years

Flow on, unbroken, slowly branching out  
Into new beauty, as a river winds  
Into new channels ? One, singing through  
the hills,  
Mirrors the hanging precipice and the  
pine ;  
And one through level meadows curves  
away,  
Turns a dark wheel, or foams along a weir,  
Then, in a pool of shadow, drowns the  
moon.

## III.

AN ENGLISH INTERLUDE :  
ERASMUS DARWIN.

ALREADY in England, bearing the same  
fire,

A far companion whom he never knew  
Had long been moving on the same dark  
quest,

But through what quiet secluded walks  
of peace.

Out of the mist emerged the little City  
Of Lichfield, clustering round its Minster  
Pool

That, like a fragment of the sky on earth,  
Reflected its two bridges, gnarled old trees,  
Half-timbered walls ; a bare-legged child  
at play



Upon its brink ; two clouds like floating  
    swans,

Two swans like small white clouds ; a boy  
    that rode

A big brown cart-horse lazily jingling by ;  
And the cathedral, like a three-spired  
    crown,

Set on its northern bank.

                                    Then, from the west,  
Above it, walled away from the steep  
    street,

I saw Erasmus Darwin's bluff square  
    house.

Along its front, above the five stone steps  
That climbed to its high door, strange  
    vines and fronds

Made a green jungle in their dim prison  
    of glass.

Behind, its windows overlooked a close  
Of rambling mellow roofs, and coldly  
    stared

At the cathedral's three fore-shortened  
    spires,

Which seemed to draw together, as though  
in doubt  
Of what lay hidden in those bleak staring  
eyes.

There dwelt that eager mind, whom fools  
deride  
For laced and periwigged verses on his  
flowers ;  
Forgetting how he strode before his age,  
And how his grandson caught from his  
right hand  
A fire that lit the world.

I saw him there,  
In his brown-skirted coat, among his  
plants,  
Pondering the thoughts, at which that  
dreamer sneered,  
Who, through a haze of opium, saw a star  
Twinkling within the tip of the crescent  
moon.  
Dispraise no song for tricks that fancy  
plays,

Nor for blind gropings after an unknown  
light,

But let no echo of Abora praise for  
this

The drooping pinion and unseeing eye.

Seek, poet, on thy sacred height, the  
strength

And glory of that true vision which shall  
grasp,

In clear imagination, earth and heaven,

And from the truly seen ascend in power

To those high realms whereof our heaven  
and earth

Are images and shadows, and their law

Our shining lanthorn and unfailing guide.

There, if the periwigged numbers failed  
to fly,

Let babbling dreamers who have also  
failed

Wait for another age. The time will  
come

When all he sought and lost shall mount  
and sing.

He saw the life-stream branching out  
before him,

Its forms and colours changing with their  
sky :

Flocks in the south that lost their warm  
white fleece ;

And, in the north, the stubble-coloured  
hare

Growing snow-white against the winter  
snows.

The frog that had no jewel in his head,

Except his eyes, was yet a fairy prince,

For he could change the colours of his  
coat

To match the mud of the stream wherein  
he reigned ;

And, if he dwelt in trees, his coat was  
green.

He saw the green-winged birds of Paraguay  
Hardening their beaks upon the shells they  
cracked ;

The humming-bird, with beak made needle-  
fine

For sucking honey from long-throated  
    blooms ;  
Finches with delicate beaks for buds of  
    trees,  
And water-fowl that, in their age-long  
    plashing  
At the lake's edge, had stretched the films  
    of skin  
Between their claws to webs. Out through  
    the reeds  
They rowed at last, and swam to seek their  
    prey.  
He saw how, in their war against the  
    world,  
Myriads of lives mysteriously assumed  
The hues that hid them best ; the butter-  
    fly dancing  
With its four petals among so many  
    flowers,  
Itself a wingéd flower ; the hedgerow birds  
With greenish backs like leaves, but their  
    soft breasts  
Light as a downy sky, so that the hawk,

Poised overhead, sees only a vanishing  
leaf ;

Or, if he swoops along the field below them,  
Loses their silvery flight against the cloud.

He saw the goldfinch, vivid as the blooms  
Through which it flutters, as though their  
dews had splashed

Red of the thistle upon its head and  
throat,

And on its wings the dandelion's gold.

He saw the skylark coloured like its nest  
In the dry grass ; the partridge, grey and  
brown

In mottled fields, escaping every eye,  
Till the foot stumbles over it, and the  
clump

Of quiet earth takes wing and whirrs  
away.

I saw him there, a strange and lonely soul,  
An eagle in the Swan of Lichfield's pen,  
Stretching clipped wings and staring at  
the sky.

He saw the multitudinous hosts of life,  
All creatures of the sea and earth and  
air,

Ascending from one living spiral thread,  
Through tracts of time, unreckonable in  
years.

He saw them varying as the plastic clay  
Under the Sculptor's hands.

He saw them flowing  
From one Eternal Fount beyond our world,  
The inscrutable and indwelling Primal  
Power,

His only *vera causa* ; by whose will  
There was no gulf between the first and  
last.

There was no break in that long line of  
law

Between the first life drifting in the sea,  
And man, proud man, the crowning form  
of earth,

Man whose own spine, the framework of  
his pride,

The fern-stem of his life, trunk of his tree,

Sleeps in the fish, the reptile, and the  
    orang,

As all those lives in his own embryo sleep.

What deeper revolution, then, must shake  
Those proud ancestral dynasties of earth ?  
What little man-made temples must go  
    down ?

And what august new temple must arise,  
One vast cathedral, gargoyled with strange  
    life,

Surging through darkness, up to the un-  
    known end ?



## IV.

LAMARCK AND CUVIER : THE  
*VERA CAUSA*.

FEAR nothing, Swan of Lichfield. Tuck  
 thy head

Beneath thy snowy wing and sleep at ease.  
 Drift quietly on thy shadowy Minster  
 Pool.

No voice comes yet to shake thy placid  
 world.

Far off—in France—thy wingless angels  
 make

Strange havoc, but the bearer of this fire,  
 The wise physician's unknown comrade,  
 toils

Obscurely now, through his more perilous  
 night,

Seeking his *vera causa*, with blind eyes.

Blind, blind as Galileo in his age,  
Lamarck embraced his doom and, as in  
youth,  
Held to the post assigned, till Life or Death  
Relieved him. All those changes of the  
world  
He had seen more clearly than his un-  
known friend ;  
And traced their natural order.  
He saw the sea-gull like a flake of foam  
Tossed from the waves of that creative sea ;  
The fish that like a speckled patch of sand  
Slides over sand upon its broad flat side,  
And twists its head until its nether eye  
Looks upward, too, and what swam up-  
right once  
Is fixed in its new shape, and the wry mouth  
Grimaces like a gnome at its old foes.  
He saw the swarming mackerel shoals that  
swim  
Near the crisp surface, rippled with blue  
and green  
Round their dark backs to trick the  
pouncing gull,

But silver-bellied to flash like streaks of  
light

Over the ravenous mouths that from below  
Snap at the leaping gleams of the upper  
sea.

And all these delicate artistries were  
wrought

By that strange Something-Else which  
blind men call

“Environment,” and the name is all their  
need ;

A Something-Else that, through the sum  
of things,

Labours unseen ; and, for its own strange  
ends,

Desirous of more swiftness and more  
strength,

Will teach the hunted deer to escape and fly,  
Even while it leads the tiger to pursue.

He saw that sexual war ; the stags that  
fought

In mating-time ; the strong confirmed in  
power

By victory. Lust and hunger, pleasure  
and pain,  
Like instruments in a dread Designer's hand,  
Lured or dissuaded, tempted and transformed.

He saw dark monsters in primeval forests  
Tearing the high green branches down for food  
Age after age, till from their ponderous  
heads  
Out of their own elastic flesh they stretched  
A trunk that, like a long grey muscular  
snake,  
Could curl up through the bunches of  
green leaves,  
And pluck their food at ease as cattle  
browse ;  
Life's own dark effort aiding that strange  
Power  
Without, and all controlled in one great  
plan,  
Grotesquely free, and beautifully at one  
With law, upsurging to the unknown end.

All Nature like a vast chameleon changed ;  
And all these forms of life through endless  
years,

Changing, developing, from one filament  
rose.

Man, on the heights, retravelled in nine  
moons

All that long journey in little, never to lose  
What life had learned on its æonian way :  
Man on the heights ; but not divided now  
From his own struggling kindred of the  
night.

Few dared to think it yet and set him free  
Through knowledge of himself and his own  
power ;

Few, yet, in France or England. Let him  
bask

Where in six days God set him at his ease  
Among His wingless angels ; there to hate  
The truth, until he breaks his own vain  
heart

And finds the law at last and walks with  
God,

Who, not abhorring even the mire and clay

In the beginning, breathed His life through  
all.

This was his *vera causa*. Hate, contempt,  
Ridicule, like a scurrilous wind swooped  
down

From every side. Great Cuvier, with the  
friends

Of orthodoxy, sneered — could species  
change

Their forms at will ? Could the lean  
tiger's need

To crouch in hiding stripe his tawny flesh  
With shadows of the cane-brake where he  
lay ?

Could the giraffe, by wishing for the leaves  
Beyond his reach, add to his height one inch ?  
Or could the reptile's fond desire to fly  
Create his wings ?

Could Cuvier read one line  
Of this blind man, he might have held his  
peace,

Found his own *vera causa*, and sunk his  
pride ;

And even the wiser Darwin, when he came,  
Might have withheld his judgment for an  
hour,

And learned from his forerunner. But, in  
their haste,

They flung away his fire ; and, as he fell,  
They set their heels upon it and stamped  
it out.

Not always does the distant age restore  
The balance, or posterity renew  
The laurel on the cold dishonoured brow  
Unjustly robbed and blindly beaten down.  
He laboured on in blindness. At his side  
One faithful daughter, labouring with her  
pen,

As he dictated, wrote, month after month,  
Year after year ; and, when her father died,  
She saw him tossed into the general grave,  
The pauper's fosse, where none can trace  
him now,

In Montparnasse, but wrapt in deeper peace  
Among the unknown and long-forgotten  
dead.

## VIII.—IN GERMANY.

GOETHE.

I.

### THE DISCOVERER.

THE wreathing mist was quietly breathed  
away.

I stood upon a little hill at night ;  
The tang of pinewoods and the warbling joy  
Of hidden brooks was round me.

The dark hill

Sloped to a darker garden. On the crest,  
A wooden cabin rose against the stars.  
Its open door, a gap of golden light  
In deep blue gloom, told me that he was  
there.



I saw his darkened house asleep below,  
And Weimar clustering round it, a still  
cloud  
Of shadowy slumbering houses.

Like a shadow,  
Tracking the Sun-god to his midnight lair,  
I climbed to the lighted cabin on the  
crest,  
And I saw Goethe.

At his side, a lamp  
On a rude table, out of tumbled waves  
Of manuscript, like an elfin lighthouse  
rose.

His bed, a forester's couch for summer  
nights,  
Was thrust into a corner. Rows of books  
Lined the rough walls.

A letter was in his hand  
From Craigenputtock ; and while he looked  
at it,  
The unuttered thoughts came flowing into  
the mind  
Of his invisible listener—Shadow-of-a-Leaf.

All true, my friend ; but there's no half-way house.

Rid you of Houndsditch, and you'll not maintain

This quite ungodlike severance of mankind

From Nature and its laws ; though I should lose

My Scots apostle, if I called it so.

What's an apostle ? Is it one who sees

Just so much of his hero, as reflects

Himself and his own thoughts ? I like him well,

And yet he makes me lonelier than before.

Houndsditch may go ; but Cuvier will go first ;

With all the rest who isolate mankind

From its true place in Nature.

Everywhere

I saw the one remodulated form.

The leaf ascended to mysterious bliss

And was assumed, with happy sister-leaves,  
Into the heavenly glory of a flower.

Pistil and stamen, calyx and bright crown  
Of coloured petals, all were leaves transformed,  
Transfigured, from one type.

I saw in man  
And his wild kinsfolk of the woods and  
seas,  
In fish and serpent, eagle and orang,  
One knotted spine that curled into a skull.  
It ran through all their patterns everywhere,  
Playing a thousand variants on one theme,  
Branching through all the frame of fins  
and wings  
And spreading through their jointed hands  
and feet.

Throughout this infinite universe I heard  
The music of one law.

Is man alone  
Belied by all the signs of his ascent ?  
Are men even now so far above the  
beasts ?

What can the tiger teach them when they  
kill ?

Are they so vain that they'd deny the  
bones

An inch beneath their skin—bones that  
when stripped

Of flesh and mixed with those of their  
dumb kin

Themselves could not distinguish ? How  
they clung

To that distinction in the skull of man.

It lacked the inter-maxillary. They grew  
angry

When I foretold it would be found one day.

What's truth to a poet ? Back to your  
dainty lies !

And then—one day—I found it.

Did they say

Strange work for a poet ? Is mankind  
asleep

That it can never feel what then I felt,

To find my faith so quietly confirmed ?

I held it in my hand and stared at it,

An eyeless hollow skull that once could  
think

Its own strange thoughts and stare as well  
as we ;

A skull that once was rocked upon a  
breast,

And looked its deathless love through  
dying eyes ;

And, in that skull, above the incisor teeth,  
The signs that men denied,—of its ascent  
Through endless ages, in the savage night  
Of jungle-worlds, before mankind was born.

No thought for poets, and no wonder  
there ?

No gateway to the kingdoms of the mind ?  
No miracle in the miracle that I saw  
Touched, held.

My body tingled. All my veins  
Froze with the inconceivable mystery,  
The weirdness and the wonder of it all.  
No vision ? And no dream ? Let poets  
play

At bowls with Yorick's relic then, for ever ;  
Or blow dream-bubbles. I've a world to  
    shape ;  
A law to guide me, and a God to find.

That night in sleep I saw—it was no  
    dream !—

It was too wild, too strange, too darkly  
    true,

And all too human in its monstrous pangs  
To be a dream. I saw it, and I live.

I saw, I saw, and closed these eyes to see  
That terrible birth in darkness, the black  
    night

Of naked agony that first woke the soul.

Night and the jungle, burning with great  
    stars,

Rolled all around me. There were steaming  
    pools

Of darkness, and the smell of the wild  
    beast

Musky and acrid on the blood-warm air.

The night was like a tiger's hot sweet  
mouth ;

I heard a muffled roar, and a wild  
cry,

A shriek, a fall.

I saw an uncouth form,  
Matted with hair, stretched on the blood-  
stained earth ;

And, in the darkness, darker than the  
night,

Another form uncouth, with matted hair,  
Long-armed, like a gorilla, stooping low  
Above his mate.

She did not move or breathe.  
He felt her body with his long-clawed  
hands,

And called to her—a harsh, quick, startled  
cry.

She did not hear. One arm was tightly  
wound

About her little one. Both were strangely  
still,

Stillter than sleep.

He squatted down to wait.  
They did not move all night. At dawn he  
stood  
By that stiff mockery. He stretched up  
his arms  
And clutched at the red sun that mocked  
him, too.  
Then, out of his blind heart, with one  
fierce pang,  
The man-child, Grief, was born.  
His round dark eyes  
Pricked with strange brine, and his broad  
twitching mouth  
Quivered. He fell on the dark unanswering  
earth  
Beside his dead, with inarticulate cries,  
Great gasping sobs that seemed to rend his  
flesh  
And shook him through and through.  
The night returned and, with the night, a  
hope,  
Because he could not see their staring eyes.  
He rushed into the jungle and returned



With fruits and berries, ripe and soft and  
red.

He rubbed the dark wet plums against  
their lips.

He smeared the juices on their locked  
white teeth ;

Pleading with little murmurs, while the  
stars

Wheeled overhead, and velvet-footed  
beasts

Approached and stared with eyes of gold  
and green ;

And even the little leaves were all alive ;

And tree-toads chirruped ; but those  
dark forms lay still.

Day followed night. He did not know  
them now.

All that had been so swift to answer him  
Was gone. But whither ? Every day he saw  
A ball of light, arising in the East,  
And moving overhead the self-same way  
Into the West. . . .

The strange new hunger eating at his  
heart

Urged him to follow it, stumbling blindly  
on

Through endless forests ; but it moved so  
swiftly

He could not overtake it, could not reach  
The place where it went down, ere darkness  
came.

Then—in the dark—a shadow sometimes  
moved

Before him, like the shadow he had lost,  
And with a cry, *Yoo ! Yoo !* he would  
awake

And, crashing through the forests to the  
West,

Would try to steal a march upon the sun,  
And see it rise inexorably behind him,  
And sail above, inexorably, at noon,  
And sink beyond, inexorably, at night.

Then, after many suns had risen and set,  
He saw at dusk a blaze of crimson light

Between the thinning tree-trunks and  
emerged

Out of the forest into a place of rocks,  
Washed by a water greater than the world.  
He stood, an uncouth image carved in  
stone,

Staring into the West. He saw the sun  
Staining the clouds and sinking into the  
flood.

His lips were parched with thirst, a deeper  
thirst

Than any spring on earth could quench  
again ;

And when he laid him down upon the  
shore

To drink of that deep water, he knew well  
That he was nearer now to what he sought,  
Because it tasted salt as his lost tears.

He drank. He waded out, and drank  
again.

Then a big wave of darkness rushed upon  
him,

And rolled him under. He rose, and with  
    great arms  
Swam out into that boundless flood of  
    brine  
Towards the last glimmer of light ; a dark,  
    blind brute,  
Sobbing and panting, till the merciful  
    waves,  
Salt in his eyes and salt upon his lips,  
Had drawn the agony out of his labouring  
    limbs  
And gently as the cradling boughs that  
    once  
Rocked him to sleep, embraced and drew  
    him down  
Into oblivion, the first life that caught  
With eyes bewildered by the light they  
    knew,  
A glimpse of the unknown light beyond the  
    world.

## GOETHE.

## II.

## THE PROPHET.

BEFORE the first wild matins of the thrush  
Had ended, or the sun sucked up the dew,  
I saw him wrestling with his thoughts. He

rose,

Laid down that eagle's feather in his  
hand,

And looked at his own dawn.

He did not speak.

Only the secret music of his mind  
In an enchanted silence flowed to meet  
The listener, as his own great morning  
flowed  
Through those Æolian pinewoods at his  
feet.

Colours and forms of earth and heaven you  
flow  
Like clouds around a star—the streaming  
robe  
Of an Eternal Glory. Let the law  
Of Beauty, in your rhythmic folds, by  
night  
And day, through all the universe, reveal  
The way of the unseen Mover to these eyes.

Last night I groped into the dark abyss  
Under the feet of man, and saw Thee there  
Ascending, from that depth below all  
depth.

O, now, at dawn, as I look up to heaven  
Descend to meet me, on my upward way.  
How shall they grasp Thy glory who  
despise  
The law that is Thy kingdom here on  
earth,

Our way of freedom and our path to Thee ?  
How shall they grasp that law, or rightly  
know

One truth in Nature, who deny Thy  
Power,  
Unresting and unhasting, everywhere ?  
How shall the seekers, bound to their own  
tasks,  
Each following his own quest, each spying  
out  
His fragment of a truth, reintegrate  
Their universe and behold all things in one ?  
Be this the task of Song, then, to renew  
That universal vision in the soul.  
Rise, Poet, to thy universal height,  
Then stoop, as eagles do from their wide  
heaven  
On their particular prey. Between the  
clouds  
They see more widely and truly than the  
mole  
At work in his dark tunnel, though he  
cast  
His earth upon the fields they watch afar.  
Work on, inductive mole ; but there's a  
use

In that too lightly abandoned way of  
thought,  
The way of Plato, and the way of Christ,  
That man must find again, ere he can  
build  
The temple of true knowledge. Those who  
trust  
To Verulam's *Novum Organum* alone,  
Never can build it. Quarriers of the  
truth,  
They cut the stones, but cannot truly lay  
them ;  
For only he whose deep remembering  
mind  
Holds the white archetype, can to music  
build  
His towers, from the pure pattern im-  
printed there.  
He, and he only, in one timeless flash  
Through all this moving universe discerns  
The inexorable sequences of law,  
And, in the self-same flash, transfiguring  
all,



Uniting and transcending all, beholds  
With my Spinoza's own ecstatic eyes  
God in the hidden law that fools call  
    "chance,"  
God in the star, the flower, the moondrawn  
    wave,  
God in the snake, the bird, and the wild  
    beast,  
God in that long ascension from the dark,  
God in the body and in the soul of man,  
God uttering life, and God receiving death.

## IX.—IN ENGLAND.

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DARWIN.

I.

### CHANCE AND DESIGN.

*“ I am the whisper that he ceased to hear,”  
The quiet voice of Shadow-of-a-Leaf began ;  
And, as he spoke, the flowing air before me  
Shone like a crystal sphere, wherein I saw  
All that he pictured, through his own deep  
eyes.*

I waited in his garden there, at Down.  
I peered between the crooklights of a  
hedge  
Where ragged robins grew.

Far off, I heard  
The clocklike rhythm of an ironshod staff  
Clicking on gravel, clanking on a flint.  
Then, round the sand-walk, under his trees  
    he strode,  
A tall lean man, wrapt in a loose dark  
    cloak,  
His big soft hat of battered sun-burnt straw  
Pulled down to shade his face. But I  
    could see,  
For I looked upward, the dim brooding  
    weight  
Of silent thought that soon would shake  
    the world.

He paused to watch an ant upon its way.  
He bared his head. I saw the shaggy brows  
That like a mountain-fortress overhung  
The deep veracious eyes, the dogged face  
Where kindness and patience, knowledge,  
    power,  
And pain quiescent under the conquering  
    will,

In that profound simplicity which marks  
The stature of the mind, the truth of art,  
The majesty of every natural law.  
The child's wise innocence, and the silent  
    worth  
Of human grief and love, had set their  
    seal.

I stole behind him, and he did not hear  
Or see me. I was only Shadow-of-a-Leaf ;  
And yet—I knew the word was on its way  
That might annul his life-work in an hour.  
I heard the whisper of every passing  
    wing  
Where, wrapt in peace, among the hills of  
    Kent,  
The patient watchful intellect had prepared  
A mightier revolution for mankind  
Even than the world-change of Copernicus  
When the great central earth began to  
    move  
And dwine to a grain of dust among the  
    stars.

I saw him pondering over a light-winged  
seed

That floated, like an elfin aeronaut,  
Across the path. He caught it in his hand  
And looked at it. He touched its delicate  
hooks

And set it afloat again. He watched it  
sailing,

Carrying its tiny freight of life away  
Over the quick-set hedge, up, into the  
hills.

I heard him muttering, " beautiful ! Surely  
this

Implies design !

Design ? " Then, from his face  
The wonder faded, and he shook his head ;  
But with such reverence and humility  
That his denial almost seemed a prayer.

A prayer—for, not long after, in his house,  
I saw him bowed, the first mind of his age,  
Bowed, helpless, by the deathbed of his  
child ;

Pondering, with all that knowledge, all  
that power,  
Powerless, and ignorant of the means to  
save ;  
A dumb Prometheus, bending his great  
head  
In silence, as he drank those broken words  
Of thanks, the pitiful thanks of small  
parched lips,  
For a sip of water, a smile, a cooling hand  
On the hot brow ; thanks for his goodness  
—God !  
Thanks from a dying child, just ten years  
old !

And, while he stood in silence by her grave,  
Hearing the ropes creak as they lowered  
her down  
Into the cold dark hollow, while he  
breathed  
The smell of the moist earth, those calm  
strange words—  
*I am the Resurrection and the Life,*

Echoed and echoed through his lonely  
mind,  
Only to deepen his agony of farewell  
Into Eternity.

Dumbly there he strove  
To understand how accents so divine,  
In words so worthy of eternal power,  
So postulant of it in their calm majesty,  
Could breathe through mortal lips.

Madman or God,  
Who else could say them ?

God it could not be,  
If in his mortal blindness he saw clear ;  
And yet, and yet, could madness wring the  
heart

Thus, thus, and thus, for nineteen hundred  
years ?

*Would that she knew, would God that she  
knew now,  
How much we loved her !*

The blind world, still ruled  
By shams, and following in hypnotic flocks

The sheep-bell of an hour, still thought  
of him

“ The Man of Science ” as less or more than  
man,

Coldly aloof from love and grief and pain ;  
Held that he knew far more, and felt far  
less

Than other men, and, even while it praised  
The babblers for their reticence and their  
strength,

The shallow for their depth, the blind for  
sight,

The rattling weathercocks for their love of  
truth,

Ere long would brand, as an irreverent fool,  
This great dumb simple man, with his  
bowed head.

Could the throng see that drama, as I saw  
it—

I, Shadow - of - a - Leaf,— could the blind  
throng discern

The true gigantic drama of those hours



Among the quiet hills as, one by one,  
His facts fell into place ; their broken edges  
Joined, like the fragments of a vast mosaic,  
And, slowly, the new picture of the world,  
Emerging in majestic pageantry  
Out of the primal dark, before him grew ;  
Grew by its own inevitable law ;  
Grew, and earth's ancient fantasies  
    dwindled down ;  
The stately fabric of the old creation  
Crumbled away ; while man, proud demi-  
    god,  
Stripped of all arrogance now, priest,  
    beggar, king,  
Captive and conqueror, all must own alike  
Their ancient lineage. Kin to the dumb  
    beasts  
By the red life that flowed through all  
    their veins  
From hearts of the same shape, beating  
    all as one  
In man and brute ; kin, by those kindred  
    forms

Of flesh and bone, with eyes and ears and  
mouths

That saw and heard and hungered like his  
own,

His mother Earth reclaimed him.

Back and back,

He traced them, till the last faint clue  
died out

In lifeless earth and sea.

I watched him striving  
To follow further, bending his great brows  
Over the intense lens. . . .

Far off, I heard  
The murmur of human life, laughter and  
weeping ;

Heard the choked sobbings by a million  
graves,

And saw a million faces, wrung with grief,  
Lifted forlornly to the Inscrutable Power.

I saw him raise his head. I heard his thought  
As others hear a whisper—*Surely this  
Implies design !*

And worlds on aching worlds  
Of dying hope were wrapped in those four  
words.

He stared before him, wellnigh over-  
whelmed

For one brief moment, with instinctive awe  
Of Something that . . . determined every  
force

Directed every atom. . . .

Then, in a flash,  
The indwelling vision vanished at the  
voice

Of his own blindfold reason. For what  
mind

Could so unravel the complicated threads,  
The causes that are caused by the effects  
Of other causes, intricately involved,  
Woven and interwoven, in endless mazes,  
Wandering through infinite time, infinite  
space,

And yet, an ordered and mysterious whole,  
Before whose very being all mortal power  
Must abdicate its sovereignty ?

A dog  
Might sooner hope to leap beyond the mind  
Of Newton than a man might hope to grasp  
Even in this little whirl of earth and sun  
The Scheme of the All-determining Absolute.

And yet—if that—the All-moving, were  
the One  
Reality, and sustained and made all forms,  
Then, by the self-same power in man himself  
Whatever was real in man might understand  
That same Reality, being one substance  
with it,  
One substance with the essential Soul of  
all,—  
Might understand, as children understand,  
Even in ignorance, those who love them best;  
Might recognise, as through their innocent  
eyes,  
The highest, which is Love, though all the  
worlds  
Of lesser knowledge passed unheeded by.

What meant those moments else ?  
    Moments that came  
And went on wings, wild as these wings of  
    mine,  
The wings of Shadow-of-a-Leaf,  
Quick with a light that never could be  
    reached  
By toiling up the mountain - sides of  
    thought ;  
Consummate meanings that were never  
    found  
By adding units ; moments of strange awe  
When that majestic sequence of events  
We call the cosmos, from its wheeling atoms  
Up to its wheeling suns, all spoke one  
    Power,  
One Presence, One Unknowable, and One  
    Known ?

*In the beginning, God made heaven and  
    earth :*

He, too, believed it, once. . . .

## II.

## THE VOYAGE.

As if the wings  
Of Shadow-of-a-Leaf had borne me through  
the West

So that the sunset changed into the dawn,  
I saw him in his youth.

The large salt wind,  
The creak of cordage, the wild swash of  
waves

Were round him as he paced the clear  
white deck,

An odd loose-tweedied sojourner, in a world  
Of uniforms and guns.

The *Beagle* plunged  
Westward, upon the road that Drake had  
sailed ;

But this new voyager, on a longer quest,

Sailed on a stranger sea ; and, though I  
heard

His ringing laugh, he seemed to live apart  
In his own mind, from all who moved  
around him.

I saw him while the *Beagle* basked at anchor  
Under West Indian palms. He lounged  
there, tanned

With sun ; tall, lankier in his cool white  
drill ;

The big slouched straw pulled down to  
shade his eyes.

The stirring wharf was one bright haze of  
colour ;

Kaleidoscopic flakes, orange and green,  
Blood-red and opal, glancing to and fro,  
Through purple shadows. The warm air  
smelt of fruit.

He leaned his elbows on the butt of a gun  
And listened, while a red-faced officer,  
breathing

Faint whiffs of rum, expounded lazily,  
With loosely stumbling tongue, the cynic's  
code

His easy rule of life, belying the creed  
That both professed.

And, in one flash, I caught  
A glimpse of something deeper, missed by  
both,—

The subtle touch of the Master-Ironist  
Unfolding his world-drama, point by point,  
In every sight and sound and word and  
thought,  
Packed with significance.

Out of its myriad scenes  
All moving swiftly on, unguessed by man,  
To close in one great climax of clear light,  
This vivid moment flashed.

The cynic ceased ;  
And Darwin, slowly knitting his puzzled  
brows,

Answered, "*But it is wrong !*"

"Wrong ?" chuckled the other. "Why  
should it be wrong ?"



And Darwin, Darwin,—he that was to  
grasp

The crumbling pillars of their infidel Temple  
And bring them headlong down to the  
honest earth,

Answered again, naïvely as a child,

“ *Does not the Bible say so ?* ”

A broad grin  
Wreathed the red face that stared into his  
own ;

And, later, when the wardroom heard the  
jest,

The same wide grin from Christian mouth  
to mouth

Spread like the ripples on a single pool,  
Quietly enough. They liked him. They'd  
not hurt him.

And Darwin, strange, observant, simple  
soul,

Saw clearly enough ; had eyes behind his  
back

For every smile ; though in his big slow  
mind

He now revolved a thought that greatly  
puzzled him,  
A thought that, in their light sophis-  
tication,

These humorists had not guessed.

Once, in his cabin,  
His red-faced cynic had picked up a  
book

By one whose life was like a constant  
light

On the high altar of Truth.

He had read a page,  
Then flung it down, with a contemptuous  
oath,

Muttering, "These damned atheists !  
Why d'you read them ? "

Could pagan minds be stirred, then, to  
such wrath

Because the man they called an " atheist "   
smiled

At dates assigned by bland ecclesiasts  
To God for His creation ?

*Man was made  
On March the ninth, at ten o'clock in the  
morning*

*(A Tuesday), just six thousand years ago :*  
A legend of a somewhat different cast  
From that deep music of the first great  
phrase  
In *Genesis*. The strange irony here struck  
home.

For Darwin, here, was with the soul-  
bowed throng  
Of prophets, while the ecclesiasts blandly  
toyed

With little calendars, which his "atheist's  
book,"

In its irreverence, whispered quite away ;  
Whispered (for all such atheists bend their  
heads

Doubtless in shame) that, in the Book of  
Earth,

Six thousand years were but as yesterday,  
A flying cloud, a shadow, a breaking  
wave.

Million of years were written upon the  
rocks

That told its history. To upheave one range  
Of mountains, out of the sea that had  
submerged

So many a continent, ere mankind was  
born,

The harnessed forces, governed all by law,  
Had laboured, dragging down and building  
up,

Through distances of Time, unthinkable  
As those of starry space.

It dared to say  
(This book so empty of mystery and awe !)  
That, searching the dark scripture of the  
rocks,

It found therein no sign of a beginning,  
No prospect of an end.

Strange that the Truth,  
Whether upheld by the pure law within  
Or by the power of reason, thus dismayed  
These worshippers of a little man-made  
code.

Alone there in his cabin, with the books  
Of Humboldt, Lyell, Herschel, spread  
before him,  
He made his great decision.

If the realm

Beyond the bounds of human knowledge  
gave  
So large a sanctuary to mortal lies,  
Henceforth his Bible should be one in-  
scribed  
Directly with the law—the Book of Earth.

## III.

## THE TESTIMONY OF THE ROCKS.

I SAW him climbing like a small dark  
speck

—Fraught with what vast significance to  
the world—

Among the snow-capt Andes, a dark point  
Of travelling thought, alone upon the  
heights,

To watch the terrible craters as they  
breathed

Their smouldering wrath against the sky.

I saw him,

Pausing above Portillo's pass to hear  
The sea-like tumult, where brown torrents  
rolled

Innumerable thousands of rough stones,  
Jarring together, and hurrying all one way.

He stood there, spellbound, listening to  
the voice  
Of Time itself, the moments hurrying by  
For ever irrecoverably. I heard  
His very thought. The stones were on  
their way  
To the ocean that had made them ; every  
note  
In their wild music was a prophecy  
Of continents unborn.

When he had seen  
Those continents in embryo, beds of sand  
And shingle, cumulant on the coastwise  
plains,  
Thousands of feet in thickness, he had  
doubted  
Whether the river of time itself could grind  
And pile such masses there. But when he  
heard  
The mountain-torrents rattling, he recalled  
How races had been born and passed away,  
And night and day, through years un-  
reckonable,

These grinding stones had never ceased to  
roll  
On their steep course. Not even the  
Cordilleras,  
Had they been ribbed with adamant, could  
withstand  
That slow sure waste. Even those majestic  
heights  
Would vanish. Nothing—not the wind  
that blows  
Was more unstable than the crust of the  
earth.

He landed at Valdivia, on the day  
When the great earthquake shuddered  
through the hills  
From Valparaiso, southward to Cape Horn.  
I saw him wandering through a ruined city  
Of Paraguay, and measuring on the coast  
The upheaval of new land, discovering  
rocks  
Ten feet above high-water, rocks with  
shells



For which the dark-eyed panic-stricken  
    throngs  
Had dived at ebb, a few short days ago.  
I saw him—strange discoverer—as he  
    sailed  
Through isles, not only uncharted, but  
    new-born,  
Isles newly arisen and glistening in the sun,  
And atolls where he thought an older  
    height  
Had sunk below the smooth Pacific sea.

He explored the Pampas ; and before him  
    passed  
The centuries that had made them ; the  
    great streams  
Gathering the red earth at their estuaries  
In soft rich deltas, till new plains of loam  
Over the Banda granite slowly spread,  
And seeds took root and mightier forests  
    towered,  
Forests that human foot could never tread,  
Forests that human eye could never see ;

But by the all-conquering human mind at  
last  
Trodden and seen, waving their leaves in air  
As at an incantation,  
And filled once more with monstrous forms  
of life.

He found their monstrous bones embedded  
there,  
And, as he found them, all those dry bones  
lived.

I stole beside him in the dark, and heard,  
In the unfathomable forest deeps, the crash  
Of distant boughs, a wild and lonely sound,  
Where Megatherium, the gigantic Sloth  
Whose thigh was thrice an elephant's in  
girth,  
Rose, blindly groping, and with armoured  
hands  
Tore down the trees to reach their tender  
crests  
And strip them of their more delicious  
green.

I saw him pondering on the secret bond  
Between the living creatures that he found  
On the main coast, and those on lonely  
    isles ;

Forms that diverged, and yet were closely  
    akin.

One key, one only, unlocked the mystery  
    there.

Unless God made, for every separate isle  
As it arose, new tribes of plants, birds,  
    beasts,

In variant images of the tribes He set  
Upon their nearest continent, grading all  
By time, and place, and distance from the  
    shore,

The bond between them was the bond of  
    blood.

All, all had branched from one original tree.

I saw him off the Patagonian coast  
Staring at something stranger than a  
    dream.

There, on a rocky point above the ship  
With its world-voyaging thoughts, he first  
    beheld

Primeval man. There, clustering on the  
    crag,

Backed by their echoing forests of dark  
    beech,

The naked savages yelled at the white sails,  
Like wolves that bay the moon. They  
    tossed their arms

Wildly through their long manes of stream-  
    ing hair,

Like troubled spirits from an alien world.

Whence had they risen? From what  
    ancestral night?

What bond of blood was there? What  
    dreadful Power

Begot them—fallen or risen—from heaven  
    or hell?

I saw him hunting everywhere for light  
On life's dark mystery; gathering every-  
    where

Armies of fact, that pointed all one way,  
And yet—what *vera causa* could he find  
In blindfold Nature ?

Even had he found it,  
What æons would be needed ! Earth was  
old ;  
But could the unresting loom of infinite  
time  
Weave this wild miracle, or evolve one  
nerve  
Of all this intricate network in the brain,  
This exquisite machine that looked through  
heaven,  
Revelled in colours of a sunset sky,  
Or met love's eyes on earth ?

Everywhere, now,  
He found new clues that led him all one  
way.  
And, everywhere, in the record of the  
rocks,  
Time and to spare for all that Time could  
do,  
But not his *vera causa*.

Earth grew strange.  
Even in the ghostly gleam that told the  
    watch  
One daybreak that the ship was nearing  
    home  
He saw those endless distances again. . . .  
He saw through mist, over the struggling  
    waves  
That run between the white-chalk cliffs of  
    France  
And England, sundered coasts that once  
    were joined  
And clothed with one wide forest.  
                                    The deep sea  
Had made the strange white body of that  
    broad land,  
Beautifully establishing it on death,  
Building it, inch by inch, through endless  
    years  
Out of innumerable little gleaming bones,  
The midget skeletons of the twinkling tribes  
That swarmed above in the more lucid green  
Ten thousand fathoms nearer to the sun.

There they lived out their gleam of life  
and died,

Then slowly drifted down into the dark,  
And spread in layers upon the cold sea-bed  
The invisible grains and flakes that were  
their bones.

Layer on layer of flakes and grains of lime,  
Where life could never build, they built  
it up

By their incessant death. Though but an  
inch

In every thousand years, they built it up,  
Inch upon inch, age after endless age ;  
And the dark weight of the incumbent Deep  
Compressed them (Power determined by  
what Will ?)

Out of the night that dim creation rose  
The seas withdrew. The bright new land  
appeared.

Then Gaul and Albion, nameless yet, were  
one ;

And the wind brought a myriad wingéd  
seeds,

And the birds carried them, and the forests  
grew,  
And through their tangled ways the tall  
elk roared.  
But sun and frost and rain, the grinding  
streams  
And rhythmic tides (the tools of what dread  
Hand ?)  
Still laboured on ; till, after many a change,  
The great moon-harnessed energies of the sea  
Came swinging back, the way of the south-  
west wind,  
And, æon after æon, hammering there,  
Rechannelled through that land their shin-  
ing way.  
There all those little bones now greet the sun  
In gleaming cliffs of chalk ; and, in their  
chines  
The chattering jackdaw builds, while  
overhead  
On the soft mantle of turf the violet wakes  
In March, and young-eyed lovers look for  
Spring.



What of the Cause ? O, no more rounded  
creeds

Framed in a realm where no man could  
refute them !

Honesty, honesty, honesty, first of all.

And so he turned upon the world around  
him,

The same grave eyes of deep simplicity

With which he had faced his pagan-  
christian friends

And quoted them their Bible. . . .

Slowly he marshalled his worldwide hosts  
of fact,

Legions new-found, or first assembled now,

In their due order. Lyell had not dared

To tell the truth he knew. He found in earth

The records of its vanished worlds of life,

Each with its own strange forms, in its  
own age,

Sealed in its own rock-system.

In the first,

The rocks congealed from fire, no sign of  
life ;

And, through the rest, in order as they  
    were made,  
From oldest up to youngest, first the signs  
Of life's first gropings ; then, in gathering  
    power,  
Strange fishes, lizards, birds, and uncouth  
    beasts,  
Worlds of strange life, but all in ordered  
    grades,  
World over world, each tombed in its own  
    age  
Or merging into the next with subtle  
    changes,  
Delicate modulations of one form,  
(Urged by what force ? Impelled by what  
    dark power ?)  
Progressing upward, into subtler forms  
Through all the buried strata, till there  
    came  
Forms that still live, still fight for life on  
    earth,  
Tiger and wolf and ape ; and, last of all,  
The form of man ; the child of yesterday.

Of yesterday ! For none had ever found  
Among the myriad forms of older worlds,  
Locked in those older rocks through tracts  
of time

Out-spanning thought, one vestige of man-  
kind.

There was no human footprint on the  
shores

Whose old compacted sand, now turned to  
stone,

Still showed the ripples where a summer  
sea

Once whispered, ere the mastodon was  
born.

There were the pitted marks, all driven one  
way,

That showed how raindrops fell, and the  
west wind blew.

There on the naked stone remained the  
tracks

Where first the sea-beasts crawled out of  
the sea,

A few salt yards upon the long dark trail

That led through æons to the tidal roar  
Of lighted cities and this world of tears.  
The shell, the fern, the bird's foot, the  
    beast's claw,  
Had left their myriad signs. Their forms  
    remained,  
Their delicate whorls, their branching  
    fronds, their bones,  
Age after age, like jewels in the rocks ;  
But, till the dawning of an age so late,  
It seemed like yesterday, no sign, no trace,  
No relie of mankind !

Then, in that age  
Among the skulls, made equal in the grave,  
Of ape and wolf, last of them all, looked up  
That naked shrine with its receding brows,  
And its two sightless holes, the skull of man.  
Round it, his tools and weapons, the  
    chipped flints,  
The first beginnings of his fight for power,  
The first results of his first groping thought  
Proclaimed his birth, the youngest child of  
    time.

*Born, and not made ?* Born—of what lesser  
life ?

Was man so arrogant that he could disdain  
The words he used so glibly of his God—  
*Born, and not made ?*

Could Lyell, who believed  
That, in the world around us, we should  
find  
The self-same causes and the self-same  
laws

To-day as yesterday ; and throughout all  
time ;

And that the Power behind all changes  
works

By law alone ; law that includes all  
heights,

All depths, of reason, harmony, and love ;  
Could Lyell hold that all those realms of  
life,

Each sealed apart in its own separate age,  
With its own separate species, had been  
called

Suddenly, by a special Act of God,

Out of the void and formless ? Could he  
think  
Even that mankind, this last emergent  
form,  
After so many æons of ordered law,  
Was by miraculous Hands in one wild  
hour,  
Suddenly kneaded out of the formless  
clay ?  
And was the formless clay more noble,  
then,  
Than this that breathed, this that had eyes  
to see,  
This whose dark heart could beat, this that  
could die ?  
No ! Lyell knew that this wild house of  
flesh  
Was never made by hands, not even those  
Hands ;  
And that to think so were to discrown God,  
And not to crown Him, as the blind  
believed.  
The miracle was a vaster than they knew.

The law by which He worked was all  
    unknown ;  
Subtler than music, quieter than light,  
The mighty process that through countless  
    changes,  
Delicate grades and tones and semi-tones,  
Out of the formless slowly brought forth  
    forms,  
Lifeless as crystals, or translucent globes  
Drifting in water ; till, through endless  
    years,  
Out of their myriad changes, one or two  
More subtle in combination, at the touch  
Of light began to move, began to attract  
Substances that could feed them ; blindly  
    at first ;  
But as an artist, with all heaven for  
    prize,  
Pores over every syllable, tests each thread  
Of his most tenuous thought, the moving  
    Power  
Spent endless æons of that which men call  
    Time,

To form one floating tendril that could  
close

On what it touched.

Who whispered in his ear  
That fleeting thought ?

We must suppose a Power  
Intently watching—through all the uni-  
verse—

Each slightest variant, seizing on the  
best,

Selecting them, as men by conscious choice  
In their small realm selected and reshaped  
Their birds and flowers.

We must suppose a Power  
In that immense night-cleaving pageantry  
Which men call Nature, a selective Power,  
Choosing through æons as men choose  
through years.

*Many are called, few chosen, quietly  
breathed*

Shadow-of-a-Leaf, in exquisite undertone  
One phrase of the secret music. . . .



He did not hear.

Lamarck—all too impatiently he flung  
Lamarck aside ; forgetting how in days  
When the dark Book of Earth was darker  
yet

Lamarck had spelled gigantic secrets out,  
And left an easier task for the age to  
come ;

Forgetting more than this ; for Darwin's  
mind,

Working at ease in Nature, lost its way  
In history, and the thoughts of other men.  
For him Lamarck had failed, and he  
misread

His own forerunner's mind. Blindfold  
desires

Had never shaped a wing. The grape-  
vine's need

To cling and climb could thrust no tendrils  
out.

The environing snows of Greenland could  
not cloak

Its little foxes with their whiter fur.

Nor could the wing-shut butterfly's inner  
will  
Mimic the shrivelled leaf on the withered  
bough  
So cunningly that the bird might perch  
beside it  
And never see its prey.

Was it blind chance  
That flashed his own great fragment of the  
truth  
Into his mind ? What *vera causa*, then,  
What leap of Nature brought that truth  
to birth,  
Illumining all the world ?

It flashed upon him  
As at a sudden contact of two wires  
The current flashes through ; or, when  
through space,  
A meteorite for endless ages rolls  
In darkness, and its world of night appears  
Unchangeable for ever, till, all at once,  
It plunges into a soft resisting sea  
Of planet-girdling air, and burns with heat,

And bursts into a blaze, while far below,  
Two lovers, in a world beyond its ken,  
Look from a little window into the night  
And see a falling star.

By such wild light,  
An image of his own ambiguous "chance,"  
Which was not "chance," but governed by  
a law

Unknown, too vast for men to comprehend  
(Too vast for any to comprehend but One,  
Breathed Shadow-of-a-leaf, who in each  
part discerns

Its harmony with the whole), at last the  
clue

Flashed on him. . . .

In the strange ironical scheme  
Wherein he moved, of the Master-  
Dramatist,

It was his own ambiguous "chance" that  
slipt

A book of Malthus into his drowsy hand  
And drew his drowsy eyes down to that law  
Of struggling men and nations.

Was it “ chance ”  
That in this intricate torch-race tossed him  
there

Light from one struggling on an alien  
track

And yet not alien, since all roads to truth  
Meet in one goal at last ?

Was it blind chance  
That even in this triumphant flash prepared  
The downfall of his human pride, and slipt  
The self-same volume into another hand ;  
And, in the lonely islands of Malay,  
Drew Wallace to the self-same page, and  
said

—Though only Shadow-of-a-Leaf could  
hear that voice,—

*Whose is the kingdom, whose the glory and  
power ?*

O, exquisite irony of the Master, there  
Unseen by both, their generous rivalry  
Evolved, perfected, the new thought for  
man ;

And, over both, and all their thoughts, a  
Power  
Intently watching, made of their struggle  
for truth  
An image of the law that they illumed.

So all that wasting of a myriad seeds  
In Nature's wild profusion was not waste,  
Not even such waste as drives the flying  
grains  
Under the sculptor's chisel, but was itself  
A cause of that unending struggle of life  
Through which all life ascends.

The conqueror there

Was chosen by laws inexorably precise,  
As though to infinite Reason infinite Art  
Were wedded, and had found in infinite  
“ chance ”

Full scope for their consummate cer-  
tainities,—  
Choice and caprice, freedom and law in one.  
Each slightest variant, in a myriad ways,  
That armed or shielded or could help its  
kind,

Would lead to a new triumph ; would  
    reveal,  
In varying, subtler ways of varying still ;  
New strokes of that divinest “ chance ” of all  
Which poet and sculptor count as unfore-  
    seen,  
And unforeseeable ; yet, when once  
    achieved,  
They recognise as crowning law with law,  
And witnessing to infinitudes of Power  
In that creative Will which shapes the  
    world.  
O, in that widening splendour of the mind,  
Blinder than Buffon, blinder than Lamarck,  
His eyes amazed with all that leapt to  
    light,  
Dazed with a myriad details, lost the  
    whole.  
He saw the law whereby the few were  
    chosen  
From forms already at variance. Back  
    and back  
He traced his law, and every step was true.

And yet his *vera causa* was no Cause,  
For it determined nothing. It revealed,  
In part, how subtler variants had arisen  
From earlier simpler variants, but no more.

\* \* \* \* \*

Subtler than music, quieter than light,  
The Power that wrought those changes ;  
and the last

Were all implied and folded in the first,  
As the gnarled oak-tree with its thousand  
boughs

Writhing to heaven and striking its grim  
roots

Like monstrous talons into the mountain's  
heart

Is pent in one smooth acorn. So each life,  
In little, retold the tale ; each separate  
man

Was, in himself, the world's epitome,  
A microcosm, wherein who runs may read  
The history of the whole ; from the first  
seed

Enclosed in the blind womb, until life wake

Through moons or æons of embryonic  
change  
To human thought and love, and those  
desires  
Which still grope upward, into the unknown  
realms  
As far beyond us now as Europe lay  
From the first life that crawled out of the  
sea.

There lies our hope ; but O, the endless  
way !  
And the lost road of knowledge, endless,  
too !  
That infinite hope was not for him. One  
life  
Hardly sufficed for his appointed task,  
To find on earth his clues to the unknown  
law,  
Out-miracling all miracles had he known,  
Whereby this lifeless earth, so clearly seen  
Across the abyss of time, this lifeless earth  
Washed by a lifeless ocean, by no power



But that which moves within the things we  
see,

Swept the blind rocks into the cities of  
men,

With great cathedrals towering to the sky,  
And little ant-like swarms in their dark  
aisles

Kneeling to that Unknowable.

His to trace

The way by inches, never to see the whole,  
Never to grasp the miracle in the law,  
And wrestling with it, to be writhen by  
light

As by an Angel's finger in the dark.

Could he have stood on that first lifeless  
coast

With Shadow-of-a-Leaf, and seen that  
lifeless brine,

Rocks where no mollusc clung, nor sea-  
weed grew ;

Could he have heard a whisper,—*Only wait.*

*Be patient. On one sure and certain day,  
Out of the natural changes of these rocks*

*And seas, at last, a great ship will go by ;  
Cities will dusk that heaven ; and you shall  
see*

*Two lovers pass, reading one printed book,  
The Paradiso. . . .*

Would he have been so sure  
That Nature had no miracles in her heart  
More inconceivably shattering to the mind  
Than madness ever dreamed ? For this,  
this, this,  
Had happened, though the part obscured  
the whole ;  
And his own labour, in a myriad ways,  
Endlessly linking part to part, had lost  
The *vera causa* that Lamarek had known,  
The one determining Cause that moved  
through all.

## IV.

## THE PROTAGONISTS.

THE mist cleared. As an airman flying,  
I saw,  
Between the quiet wings of Shadow-of-a-  
Leaf,  
Far down, a coiling glitter of willowy  
streams ;  
Then grey remembered battlements that  
enclosed  
Gardens, like nests of nightingales ; a  
bridge ;  
An airy tower ; a shadowy dome ; the High ;  
St Mary's delicate spire.

A sound of bells  
Rose like a spray of melody from the far  
Diminished fountains of the City of Youth.  
I heard and almost wept.

The walls grew large  
And soared to meet me. As the patterned  
streets  
Break into new dimensions, passing from  
sight  
While the airman glides and circles down,  
they rose,  
And the outer City, vanishing, revealed  
The secret life within. At once I passed  
Through walls of stone on those ethereal  
wings ;  
And, as an unseen spirit might survey  
A crowded theatre from above, I saw  
A packed assembly, gazing, hushed and  
still,  
At certain famous leaders of that hour  
On their raised daïs. Henslow in the  
midst,  
Their president, gentle, tolerant, reverent,  
kind,  
Darwin's old tutor, scientist and half-  
saint ;  
Owen beside him, crabbéd as John Knox,

And dry as his dead bones ; bland Wilber-  
force,  
The great smooth Bishop of Oxford,  
pledged and primed  
To make an end of Darwin, once for all.  
Not far away, a little in shadow, sat  
A strange young man, tall, slight, with  
keen dark eyes,  
Who might, in the irresponsible way of  
youth,  
Defend an absent thinker. Let him beware.  
There was a balance of power in science,  
too,  
Which would resent disturbance. He'd be  
crushed  
By sheer weight of authority, then set,  
Duly submissive, in his proper place.  
His name was Huxley.

A square close-crowded room,  
It held, in little, a concentrated world,  
Imaging, on a microcosmic stage,  
The doubts, the fears, the jealousies, and  
dull hates

That now beset one lonely soul at Down ;  
But imaging, also, dauntless love of truth  
In two or three, the bearers of the fire.

Henslow, subdued, with twenty reticent  
words  
That, in their mere formality, seemed  
aware  
Of silent dark momentous currents flowing  
Under the trivial ripple of use and wont,  
Called on Daubeny, first, for his discourse  
On Sex in Flowers, and their descent  
through time.

Daubeny, glancing over his glasses, bowed  
And twinkled a wise physician's rosy smile,  
As one of his many parts ; an all-round  
man,  
Sound Latinist and an excellent judge of  
wine,  
Humanist and geologist, who had tracked  
Guettard through all his craters in Au-  
vergne,

And, afterwards, with a map in his right  
hand,  
And Ovid's 'Ars Amoris' in his left,  
Traced the volcanic chains through Hun-  
gary,  
Italy, Transylvania, and returned  
To Oxford, as her botanist at the last,  
With silvery hair, but otherwise un-  
changed,  
Oxford in bloom and Oxford to the core.  
Swimming serene in academic air,  
With open mind and non-committal phrase  
He proved he knew how little all men know;  
And whoso kept that little to himself  
Could never be caught tripping.

Then he smiled,  
And so remained the wisest of them all.

For half an hour the sexes of the flowers  
Danced from his learned discourse, through  
the minds  
Of half his feminine hearers, like a troop  
Of Bacchanals, blowing kisses.

In the crowd  
I saw, at the whimsical chuckle of Shadow-  
of-a-Leaf,  
The large-eyed spinster with the small  
pursed mouth,  
Eliza Pym of Woodstock, who desired  
To know about the wild flowers that she  
drew  
In delicate water-colours for her friends.  
She sat bolt upright, innocently amazed  
And vaguely trepidant in her hooped green  
gown.  
What ? Even the flowers ? How startling  
was the sound  
Of pistil ! Awed, intent, she caught at  
clues ;  
Meticulously quivering at the thought  
Of bees ; and blushing deeply when he spoke  
In baritone of male virtue in the rose.  
Through all, the evasive academic phrase,  
Putting out vaguely sensitive tentacles  
That instantly withdrew from what they  
touched,



Implied that he could view, quite unperturbed,

All theories, and remain detached, aloft  
Among the gods, in philosophic calm ;  
Nay, by his critical logic was endowed  
With something loftier.

What were gods to him,  
Who, being ephemeral, mortal, born to die,  
Could, over the port of Corpus and All  
Souls

Mellowed in classic cellars, quiz the powers  
That doomed him, as the aristocrat of  
thought

Looks through ironical lorgnettes at the  
might

Of Demos round his tumbril. They lived  
on,

Wasting their nectar, wrecking worlds on  
worlds.

He had risen, at least, superior to all that.  
He held it somewhat barbarous, vulgar,  
crude

To wallow in such profusion as the gods.

All this implied, not spoken ; for he found  
His final causes in his dry pressed flowers ;  
Proved that he knew—none better—all the  
tribe

Who had dragged a net of Latin through  
the fields ;

Proved that some flowers, at least, had  
never changed

Through many centuries. The black-  
seeded poppy

Was known to Homer. He rolled out the  
lines.

Almonds, the bitter-kernelled and the  
sweet,

Were tasted by the prophets ; and he found  
White-seeded sesamum, in the night of  
time,

Among the old Egyptians. . . .

He showed that, while his library was vast,  
Fragrant with leather, crested, tooled, and  
gilt,

He had closed the Book of Nature, and,  
on the whole,

Despite his open mind, dismissed the views  
Of this—er—new philosopher, with a smile  
That, don-wise, almost seemed to ask  
aloud,

“ Who is he, after all ? ” Not one of *us*.  
Why weigh his facts, then, further, since  
we hold

The official seals of truth in this our time.  
Such men are always wrong. They come  
and go.

The breeze would soon blow over.

All this implied,  
Not spoken, in that small dry steady smile,  
Doctor Daubeney gathered up his tails  
And made one definite and emphatic point  
By sitting down, while some eight hundred  
hands

Acclaimed his perfect don-hood.

Henslow rose,  
A little nervously. Had much pleasure,  
though . . .

And turned to Mr Huxley. Would he  
speak ?

A whisper passed, a queer new stillness  
gripped  
The expectant crowd. The clock ticked  
audibly  
*Not yet, not yet!* A sense of change at  
hand  
Stole through the silence, like the first  
cool breath  
That, over a great ship's company at night,  
Steals through the port-holes from the  
open sea.  
Then, with sure foresight, seeing the clash  
to come,  
The strange young man with the deter-  
mined mouth  
And quick dark eyes rose grimly, and flung  
down  
A single sentence, like a gyve of steel  
Wrenched from the wrists to set the strong  
hands free  
For whatsoever need might rise, if clock  
And *Zeitgeist* changed their quiet *Not Yet*  
to *Now*.

“ *A general audience, sir, where sentiment  
May interfere, unduly interfere,  
With intellect* ”—as a thin steel wire drawn  
tight  
By an iron winch, the hush grew tense  
and rang  
Low, hard, clear, cold—“ *is not a fitting  
place  
For this discussion.* ”

Silence, and the clock,  
Two great allies, the surest of them  
all,  
Dead silence, and the voice *Not Yet, Not  
Yet,*  
A cough, the creak of the chair as he sat  
down,  
A shuffle of feet, the chairman's baffled  
face,  
Then little indignant mutterings round the  
hall,  
Turning to gasps of mockery. Insolence ?  
—no,—  
Sheer weakness, full retreat !

The Bishop raised  
His eyebrows, looked at the dense dis-  
flattered crowd,  
And had no further fear. The battle was  
won.

Victory, of the only kind he knew,  
Was in his hands. Retreat must now be  
turned

Into full rout. He glanced at Owen, met  
His little sardonic smile with a wise nod,  
As if to say, "Ah, just as we foresaw."  
Excited clerics caught the flying hint  
And whispered, eyes agog, "You noticed  
that ?

He's a great man, the Bishop ! What a  
brow !

And Owen, too. Of course, they know ;  
they know ;  
And understand each other, thick as  
thieves."

Then Owen rose ; waved Huxley's empty  
excuse

Remorselessly aside ; and plunged right on,

Declaring there were facts, whereby the  
crowd

Could very fitly judge.

The crowd's own feet  
Tapped a benign applause.

Then came the facts,  
Facts from a realm that Huxley had made  
his own.

*The brain of the gorilla*—some one turned  
A faint hysterical laugh into a sneeze—  
*Linked it more closely to the lowest groups*  
Of QUADRUMANA.

“Quadru—what-did-he-say ?”  
Whispered Miss Pym unconsciously to  
herself,

“Mana, four-handed,” clerical whiskers  
breathed,

With Evangelical titillance in her ear,

“Apes, monkeys, all the things that climb  
up trees.

Says the gorilla's more like them than us.”

“Thank you.” Eliza Pym inclined her head  
A little stiffly.

Had the world gone mad ?  
Was some one in the background trying  
to find

A pedigree for mankind among the brutes ?  
Absurd, of course, and yet—one must  
confess

How like they were in some things. Unto  
each

A mouth, a nose, two eyes, flesh, blood,  
and bones

Of the same pattern.

Comic enough, and weird ;  
But what became of Genesis, then, and  
God ?

If all these whiskered men but one or  
two

So utterly disbelieved it, why discuss  
Degrees of kinship ? Surely the gulf was  
fixed

Wide as the severance between heaven and  
hell.

Then, in one dreadful gleam, she seemed  
to see



The rows of whiskered listeners, darkly  
perched,  
Herself among them, on long swaying  
boughs,  
Mesmerised, and all dumbly staring down  
With horrible fascination at great eyes,  
Green moons of cruelty, steadily smouldering,  
In depths that—smelt of tigers ; or the  
salts  
Unstoppered by the vicar's wife in front.

Smile at Eliza Pym with Shadow-of-a-  
Leaf ;  
But only if your inward sight can see  
Her memories, too—a child's uplifted face,  
The clean white cot, the fluttering nursery  
fire ;  
Old days, old faces, teaching her those lines  
From Blake, about a Lamb. Yet that—  
why that  
Might be the clue they lacked in all this  
talk

Of our dumb kinsfolk. If she could but  
speak  
And—hint it ! Why don't Bishops think  
of things  
Like that, she wondered.

Owen resumed his chair  
With loud applause.

That grim young man again,  
Huxley, was on his feet, his dark eyes lit  
With thrice the vital power of all the  
rest.

In one cool sentence, like a shining lance,  
He touched the centre of his opponent's  
shield,

And ended all the shuffling, all the doubts  
Of where he stood, how far he dared  
to go,

If truth required it. He could not accept  
Those facts from any authority ; gave  
direct

Unqualified contradiction to those facts ;  
And pledged himself to justify this course,  
Unusual as it seemed perhaps—elsewhere.

“ Elsewhere,” and as he said it, came a  
gleam  
Into his face, reflected from the heights  
Where a tribunal sits whose judgment  
holds  
Not for the fleeting moment, but all time.

“ Elsewhere ”—the Bishop smiled. He  
had not caught  
That gleam. “ Elsewhere ” was only an-  
other sign  
Of weakness, even timidity perhaps,  
And certainly retreat, not from the truth  
(He felt so sure of that) but from the  
might  
And deep resources of the established  
powers  
Whose influence ruled the world.

“ Elsewhere ” for him  
Meant Saturday, and here. The lists were  
set,  
The battle joined, and the great issue  
plain,—

Whether the human race came straight  
from God,  
Or traced its dark descent back to the  
brute,  
And left his creed a wreck of hollow  
towers,  
The haunt of bats and owls. His time to  
strike  
Would come on Saturday. Pleadings of  
“ elsewhere ”  
Would not avail. He set his jaw. Please  
God,  
He meant to drive this victory crashing  
home,  
And make an end of Darwin once for all.  
So closed the first strange scene.

The rumour spread  
Everywhere, of the Bishop's grim intent.  
Saturday's crowd, an hour before its time  
Choked all the doors, and crammed the  
long west hall.  
Black-coated members of all shades of  
thought,

Knowledge and doubt and bigotry, crushed  
their sides

In chair-packed rows together (Eliza Pym  
Among them, with her startled innocent  
eyes).

A bevy of undergraduates at the back,  
Quietly thoughtful, held their watching  
brief

For youth and for the future. Fame to  
come

Already touched the brows of a rare few  
With faint leaf-shadows of her invisible  
wreath :

Green, the philosopher, gazing at the world  
With youth's aloofness, and that inward  
light

Which shines from Oxford still ; not far  
away

The young historian of the coloured stream  
Of outward life, the ancestral pageantry  
Of England, and its tributary rills  
Flowing in dawn-gleams out of the mists  
of time.

There, too, in front, with atavistic face  
And Van Dyck beard, so oddly like the  
king  
Who loved Nell Gwynne, sat Admiral  
FitzRoy,  
Late captain of the *Beagle*, quite prick-  
eared  
With personal curiosity. Twice he told  
His neighbour that, by George, he wouldn't  
ha' missed  
This Donnybrook Fair for anything. He  
had sailed  
With Darwin round the world. They used  
to call him  
The old philosopher. Heard the bosun  
once,  
Pointing the officers out—damned funny  
it was!—  
“That's Captain FitzRoy. That's the  
second mate;  
And *that*”—pointing a thumb at Darwin's  
back—  
“*That's* our Fly-Catcher!”

Best of fellows, too,  
But queer. He'd tell you, in the simplest  
way  
—As if it meant no more than pass the  
salt,—  
Something that knocked you endways ;  
calmly shift  
A mountain-range, in half a dozen words,  
And sink it in the sea.

In fact, FitzRoy  
Felt it his duty more than once, by George,  
To expostulate ; told him plainly he'd  
upset  
*Genesis* and the Church ; and then there'd  
be  
The devil and all to pay. And now, by  
George,  
He'd done it ; and her Majesty's Admiral  
Had come on purpose, all the way from  
town,  
To hear and see the end of it.

So he said,  
Not wholly understanding why he came,—

The memory of a figure rapt and bowed  
Over a shell, or finding in the rocks,  
As though by wizardry, relics of lost  
worlds ;

Moments that, by a hardly noticed phrase,  
Had touched with orderly meaning and  
new light

The giant flaws and foldings in the hills ;  
Moments when, in the cabin, he had  
stared

Into the " old philosopher's " microscope,  
And seen the invisible speck in a water-  
drop

Grow to a great rose-window of radiant  
life

In an immense cathedral.

Vaguely enough,  
Perhaps in the dimmest hinterland of his  
mind,

There lurked a quiet suspicion that, after  
all,

His queer old friend *had* hit on something  
queer.



Three places off, his face a twinkling mask  
Of keen Scots humour, Robert Chambers  
glanced

Quietly at his watch, to hide a smile  
When some one who had "written the  
Vestiges,"  
And only half denied it, met his eye.

The vacant platform glared expectancy,  
And held the gaze now of the impatient  
crowd.

Then Henslow led the conquering Bishop in.  
Two rows of clerics, halfway down the hall,  
Drummed for their doughty champion with  
their heels.

Above, in each recessed high window-seat,  
Bishop-adoring ladies clapped their hands.

The rest filed in, mere adjuncts, modest  
foils.

Hooker and Lubbock and Huxley took  
their chairs

On Henslow's left. The beautiful gaitered  
legs,  
By their divine prerogative, on his right,  
So carelessly crossed, more eloquently  
than words  
Assured the world that everything was  
well,  
And their translation into forms of speech  
A mere formality. Next to the Bishop sat  
A Transatlantic visitor with a twang,  
One Doctor Draper, his hard wrinkled skin  
Tinged by the infinite coffee he absorbed,  
A gaunt bone-coloured desert, unassuaged.  
He was a grim diplomatist, as befits  
A pilgrim of the cosmos; ready at Rome  
To tickle the Romans; and, if bishops  
ruled,  
And found themselves at odds with free-  
born souls  
Outside the Land of Freedom, he'd be-  
friend  
Bishops, bring in the New World, stars  
and all,

To rectify that balance, and take home  
For souvenir, with a chip of the pyramids,  
The last odd homages of the obsequious  
Old.

The president called him for his opening  
speech.

He stood and beamed, enjoying to the full  
The sense that, with his mighty manu-  
script,

He could delay the antagonists for an  
hour.

He cleared his throat. He took from a  
little box

A small black lozenge, popped it into his  
mouth,

Leisurely rolled it under a ruminant tongue,  
Then placidly drawled his most moment-  
ous words :

*“ Proh-fessur Henslow, Bishop Wilbur-force,  
Members, AND friends, in this historic hall,  
I assk first, AIR we a forttooitous  
Con-course of atoms ? ”* Half unconsciously,

He struck at once to the single central  
heart  
Of all the questions asked by every age ;  
As though he saw what only Shadow-of-  
a-Leaf  
Had watched last night, as in a crystal  
globe,  
That scene preparing, the interweaving  
clues  
Whose inconceivable intricacy at length,  
By “ chance,” as blind men call it, through  
the maze  
Of life and time, at the one right juncture  
brought  
Two shadows, face to face, in an Oxford  
Street,  
Chambers and Huxley. “ You’ll be there  
to-morrow.”—  
“ No, I leave Oxford now.”—  
“ The enemy means  
To annihilate Darwin. You will not  
desert us ? ”—  
“ If you say that, I stay.”

Each to his place  
Had moved in his own orbit, like a star,  
Or like an atom, free-will at one with law,  
In the unplanned plan of the Master-  
Dramatist,  
Where Doctor Draper blindly played his  
part  
And asked his pregnant question. He  
droned on,  
For one enormous hour, starkly maintained  
That Europe, in its intellectual life,  
By mere "fortooity," never could have  
flowered  
To such results as blushed before him  
there  
In that historic hall of halls to-night.  
If Darwin thought so, he took leave to  
stand  
Beside them, and to smile the vast calm  
smile  
Of Arizona's desert distances,  
Till all such dragon thoughts had coiled  
away.

He took his chair. The great debate  
began.

For prelude came a menacing growl of  
storm.

A furious figure rose, like a sperm-whale,  
Out of the seething audience. A huge  
man,

With small, hot, wicked eyes and cavern-  
ous mouth,

Bellowed his own ferocious claim to  
speak

On economic grounds. He had subscribed  
His guineas, ringing guineas of red  
gold,

Ungrudgingly for years ; but prophesied  
Withdrawal of all such guineas, on all  
sides,

From this Association, if it failed  
To brand these most abominable views  
As blasphemous, bearing on their devilish  
brows,

Between their horns, the birth-mark of the  
Beast.

This last word hissed, he sank again. At  
once,  
Ere Henslow found his feet or spoke a word,  
Up leapt a raw-boned parson from the  
North,  
To seize his moment's fame. With sawing  
arm  
The Reverend Dingle, like a windmill,  
vowed  
He'd prove upon the blackboard, in white  
chalk,  
By diagram—and the chalk was in his  
hand—  
“That mawnkey and mahn had separate  
pedigrees.  
Let A here be the mawnkey, and B the  
mahn.”  
Loud laughter; shouts of “mawnkey!”  
and “sit down”  
Extinguished him. He sat; and Henslow  
quelled  
The hubbub with one clarion-clear demand,  
Dictated, surely, by the ironic powers

Who had primed the Bishop and prepared  
his fall :

*“ Gentlemen, this discussion now must rest  
On scientific grounds.”*

At once there came  
Calls for the Bishop, who, rising from his  
chair,

Urged by the same invisible ironies,  
Remarked that his old friend, Professor  
Beale,

Had something to say *first*. That weighty  
first

Conveyed the weight of his own words to  
come.

Urged still by those invisible ones, his  
friend

Dug the pit deeper ; modestly declared,  
Despite his keen worn face and shoulders  
bowed

In histologic vigils, that he felt  
His knowledge quite inadequate ; and the  
way

Was made straight—for the Bishop.



The Bishop rose, mellifluous, bland, adroit.

A gesture, lacking only the lawn sleeves  
To make it perfect, delicately conveyed  
His comfortable thought — that what  
amazed

The sheepfold must be folly.

Half the throng,  
His own experience told him, had not  
grasped

The world-inweaving argument, could not  
think

In æons. Æons, then, would be dismissed  
As vague and airy fantasies. He might  
choose

His facts at will, unchallenged. He stood  
there

Secure that his traditions could not fail,  
Basing his faith on schemes of thought  
designed

By authorised “ thinkers ” in pure artistry,  
As free from Nature’s law as coloured  
blocks

That children play with on the nursery  
    hearth,  
And puzzle about and shift and twist  
    and turn  
Until the beautiful picture, as ordained,  
Comes out, exact to the pattern, and reveals  
The artificer's plan, the pattern, as ar-  
    ranged,  
By bishops, politic statesmen, teachers,  
    guides,  
Who hold it in reserve, their final test  
Of truth, for times like this. He had been  
    so sure  
Of something deeper than all schemes of  
    thought  
That he had all too lightly primed himself  
With "facts" to match their fables ;  
    hastily crammed  
Into his mind's convenient travelling bag  
(Sound leather, British) all that he re-  
    quired,—  
Not truth, but "a good argument." He  
    had asked

Owen, who hated Huxley, to provide it ;  
And he had brought it with him,—not  
the truth,  
Not even facts, those unrelated crumbs  
Of truth, the abiding consecrated whole.  
He had brought his borrowed “ facts,”  
misunderstood,  
To meet, for the first time in all his life,  
Stark earnest thought, wrestling for truth  
alone,  
As men on earth discerned it. He had  
prayed,  
With something deeper than blind make-  
believe,  
*Thy will be done on earth ;* and yet, and yet,  
The law wherein that will might be dis-  
cerned,  
The law wherein that unity of heaven  
And earth might yet be found (could he  
but trust  
The truth, could he believe that his own  
God  
Lived in the living truth), he waved aside.

These others had not found it, but they  
    kept  
One faith that he had lost. Though it  
    should slay them,  
They trusted in the truth. They could  
    not see  
Where it might lead them. Only at times  
    they felt  
As they deciphered the dark Book of Earth  
That, following its majestic rhythm of  
    law,  
They followed the true path, the eternal  
    way  
Of That which reigns. Prophetic flashes  
    came.  
Words that the priest mechanically in-  
    toned  
Burned upon Huxley's keen ironical page  
Like sudden sapphires, drawing their  
    deeper light  
From that celestial City which endures  
Because it hath foundations : *Shall I come*  
*Before the Eternal with burnt offerings ?*

*Hath not the Eternal showed thee what is  
good,  
That thou do justly and mercifully, and walk  
Humbly with the Eternal ?*

O, irony of the Master-Dramatist,  
Who set once more those lists ; and sent  
His truth  
Unrecognised, as of old, to fight for life  
And prove itself in struggle and raise once  
more  
A nobler world above the world out-worn,  
Crushing all easy sophistry, though it stood  
Garbed as the priest of God.

The Bishop seized  
His diplomatic vantage. The blunt truth  
Of Huxley's warning offered itself to him  
As a rash gambit in their game of—tact.  
He seized it ; gracefully smoothed the  
ruffled pride  
Of that great audience, trained in a sound  
school  
To judge by common-sense.

His mobile face  
Revealed much that his politic words concealed.

His strength was in that sound old British way—

Derision of all things that transcend its codes

In life, thought, art ; the moon-calf's happy creed

That, if a moon-calf only sees the moon  
In thoughts that range the cosmos, his broad grin

Sums the whole question ; there's no more to see.

In all these aids, an innocent infidel,  
The Bishop put his trust ; and, more than all,

In vanity, the vacant self-conceit  
That, when it meets the masters of the mind

And finds them bowed before the Inscrutable Power,

Accepts their reverence and humility

As tribute, due acknowledgment of fool's  
right

To give the final judgment, and annul  
The labour of a life-time in an hour.

Dulcetly, first, he scoffed at Darwin's facts.  
"Rock-pigeons now were what they had  
always been.

Species had never changed. What were  
the proofs

Even of the variation they required  
To make this theory possible? We had  
heard

Mysterious rumours of a long-legged sheep  
Somewhere in Yorkshire (laughter). Let  
me ask

Professor Huxley, here upon the left  
(All eyes on Huxley), who believes himself  
Descended from an ape (chuckles of glee),  
How recently this happened."

The Bishop turned,  
All smiling insolence, "May I beg to know  
If this descent is on your father's side,  
Or on your mother's?"

He paused, to let the crowd  
Bellow its laughter. The unseen ironies  
Had trapped him and his flock ; and  
neither knew.

But Huxley knew. He turned, with a  
grim smile,  
And while the opposing triumph rocked  
and pealed,  
Struck one decisive palm upon his knee,  
And muttered low—“ *The Lord hath de-  
livered him  
Into my hands.*”

His neighbour stared and thought  
His wits were wandering. Yet that under-  
tone  
Sounded more deadly, had more victory  
in it,  
Than all the loud-mouthed minute's dying  
roar.

It died to a tense hush. The Bishop  
closed  
In solemn diapason. Darwin's views



Degraded woman. They debased mankind,  
And contradicted God's most Holy Word.  
Applause ! Applause ! The hall a quivering  
    mist  
Of clapping hands. From every window-  
    seat  
A flutter of ladies' handkerchiefs and shrill  
    cries  
As of white swarming sea-gulls. The black  
    rows  
Of clerics all exchanging red-faced nods,  
And drumming with their feet, as though  
    to fill  
A hundred-pedalled organ with fresh wind.  
The Bishop, like a *Gloire de Dijon* rose  
With many-petalled smiles, his plump  
    right hand  
Clasped in a firm congratulatory grip  
Of hickory-bones by Draper of New York ;  
Who had small faith in what the Bishop  
    said  
But heard the cheers, and gripped him  
    as a man

Who never means to let this good thing go.  
Motionless, on the left, the observant few,  
The silent delegates of a sterner power,  
With grave set faces, quietly looking on.  
At last the tumult, as all tumult must,  
Sank back to that deep silence. Henslow  
turned

To Huxley without speaking. Once again  
The clock ticked audibly, but its old "Not  
Yet "

Had somehow, in that uproar, in the face  
Of that tumultuous mockery, changed to  
*Now !*

The lean tall figure of Huxley quietly rose.  
He looked, for a moment, thoughtfully,  
at the crowd ;  
Saw rows of hostile faces ; caught the grin  
Of ignorant curiosity ; here and there,  
A hopeful gleam of friendship ; and, far  
back,  
The young, swift-footed, waiting for the  
fire.

He fixed his eyes on these—then, in low  
tones,

Clear, cool, incisive, “*I have come here,*”  
he said,

“*In the cause of Science only.*”

He paused again.

Then, striking the mockery out of the  
mockers’ face,

His voice rang out like steel—

“ I have heard nothing  
To prejudice the case of my august  
Client, who, as I told you, is not here.”

At once a threefold picture flashed upon  
me,

A glimpse, far off, through eyes of Shadow-  
of-a-Leaf,

First, of a human seeker, there at Down,  
Gathering his endless cloud of witnesses  
From rocks, from stones, from trees ; and  
from the signs

In man’s own body of life’s æonian way ;  
But, far above him, clothed with purer  
light,

The stern, majestic Spirit of living Truth ;  
And, more august than even his prophets  
    knew,  
Through that eternal Spirit, the primal  
    Power  
Returning into a world of faiths out-worn.

Once more, as he spoke on, a thousand  
    years  
Were but as yesterday. If these truths  
    were true,  
This theory flooded the whole world with  
    light.  
Could we believe that the Creator set  
In mockery all these birth-signs in the  
    world,  
Or once in a million years had wrecked  
    His work  
And shaped, in a flash, a myriad lives  
    anew,  
Bearing in their own bodies all the signs  
Of their descent from those that He  
    destroyed ?

Who left that ancient leaf within the  
flower ?

Who hid within the reptile those lost fins,  
And under the skin of the sea-floundering  
whale

The bones of the lost thigh ? Who dusked  
the foal

With shadowy stripes, and under its hoof  
concealed

Those ancient birdlike feet of its lost kin ?

Who matched that hoof with a rosy finger-  
nail,

Or furled that point within the human  
ear ?

Who had imprinted in the body of man,  
And in his embryo, all those intricate signs  
Of his forgotten lineage, even those gills  
Through which he drew his breath once  
in the sea ?

The speaker glanced at his antagonist.

“ You think all this too marvellous to  
be true ;

Yet you believe in miracles. You think  
The unfolding of this complicated life  
Around us, out of a simple primal form,  
Impossible; yet you know that every  
man

Before his birth, a few brief years ago,  
Was once no more than a single living cell.  
You think it ends your theory of creation.  
You say that God made *you*; and yet you  
know

—And reconcile your creed with what you  
know—

That you yourself originally ”—he held up  
A gleaming pencil-case—“ were a little  
piece

Of matter, not so large as the end of this.

But if you ask, in fine,  
Whether I'd be ashamed to claim descent  
From that poor animal with the stooping  
gait

And low intelligence, who can only grin  
And chatter as we pass by, or from a  
*man*

Who could use high position and great gifts  
To crush one humble seeker after truth—  
I hesitate, but ”—an outburst of applause  
From all who understood him drowned  
the words.

He paused. The clock ticked audibly  
again.

Then, quietly measuring every word, he  
drove

The sentence home. “ I asserted and  
repeat

A man would have no cause to feel ashamed  
Of being descended through vast tracts of  
time

From that poor ape.

Were there an ancestor  
Whom I could not recall without a sense  
Of shame, it were a *man*, so placed, so  
gifted,

Who sought to sway his hearers from the  
truth

By aimless eloquence and by skilled appeals  
To their religious prejudice.”

Was it the truth  
That conquered, or the blind sense of the  
    blow  
Justly considered, delivered, and driven  
    home,  
That brought a crash of applause from half  
    the house ?  
And more (for even the outright enemy  
Joined in that hubbub), though indignant  
    cries,  
Protested vainly, “ Abominable to treat  
The Bishop so ! ”

    The Bishop sat there dumb  
Eliza Pym, adding her own quaint touch  
Of comedy, saw that pencil shine again  
In Huxley’s hand ; compared it, at a  
    glance  
Of fawn-like eyes, with the portentous  
    form  
In gaiters ; felt the whole world growing  
    strange ;  
Drew one hysterical breath, and swooned  
    away.



## V.

THE *VERA CAUSA*.

AND yet, and yet, the victor knew too well  
His victory had a relish of the dust.

Even while the plaudits echoed in his ears,  
It troubled him. When he pondered it  
that night,

A finer shame had touched him. He had  
used

The weapons of his enemy at the last ;  
And, if he had struck his enemy down for  
truth,

He had struck him down with weapons he  
despised.

He had used them with a swifter hand and  
eye,

A subtler cunning ; and he had set his heel  
On those who took too simply to their  
heart.

A tale, whose ancient imagery enshrined  
A mystery that endured. He had pro-  
claimed

A fragment of a truth which, he knew well,  
Left the true Cause in darkness. Did he  
know

More of that Cause than *Genesis*? Could  
he see

Farther into that darkness than the child  
Folding its hands in prayer?

More clearly far  
Than Darwin, whom he had warned of it,  
he knew

The bounds of this new law; bade him  
beware

Of his repeated dogma—*Nature makes  
No leap*. He pointed always to the abyss  
Of darkness round the flickering spark of  
light

Upheld by Science. Had Wilberforce been  
armed

With knowledge and the spiritual steel  
Of Saint Augustine, who had also seen,  
Even in his age, a ladder of life to heaven,

There had been a victory of another kind  
To lighten through the world.

And Darwin knew it ;  
But, while he marshalled his unnumbered  
truths,  
He lost the Truth ; as one who takes  
command  
Of multitudinous armies in the night,  
And strives to envisage, in one sweep of  
the mind,  
Each squadron and each regiment of the  
whole,  
Ever the host that swept through his mind's  
eye,  
Though all in ordered ranks and files,  
obscured  
Army on army the infinite truth beyond.  
The gates of Beauty closed against his  
mind,  
And barred him out from that eternal  
realm,  
Whose lucid harmonies on our night bestow  
Glimpses of absolute knowledge from  
above ;

Unravelling and ennobling, making clear  
Much that had baffled us, much that else  
was dark ;

So that the laws of Nature shine like roads,  
Firm roads that lead through a significant  
world

Not downward, from the greater to the less,  
But up to the consummate Soul of all.

He could not follow them now. Back,  
back and back,

He groped along the dark diminishing road.  
The ecstasy of music died away.

The poet's vision melted into a dream.

He knew his loss, and mourned it ; but it  
marred

Not only his own happiness, as he thought.  
It blurred his vision, even of his own  
truths.

He looked long at the butterfly's radiant  
wings,

Pondered their blaze of colour, and believed  
That butterfly wooers choosing their bright  
mates

Through centuries of attraction and desire  
Evolved this loveliness. For he only saw  
The blaze of colour, the flash that lured  
the eye.

He did not see the exquisite pattern there,  
The diamonded fans of the under-wing,  
Inlaid with intricate harmonies of design ;  
The delicate little octagons of pearl,  
The moons like infinitesimal fairy flowers,  
The lozenges of gold, and grey, and blue  
All ordered in an intellectual scheme,  
Where form to form responded and faint  
lights

Echoed faint lights, and shadowy fringes ran  
Like elfin curtains on a silvery thread,  
Shadow replying to shadow through the  
whole.

Did eyes of the butterfly wooer mark all  
this,—

A subtlety too fine for half mankind ?  
He tossed a shred of paper on to his lawn ;  
He saw the white wings blindly fluttering  
round it.

He did not hear the whisper of Shadow-of-  
a-Leaf,

*Was this their exquisite artistry of choice ?  
Had wooers like these evolved this loveliness ?*

He groped into the orchestral universe  
As one who strives to trace a symphony  
Back to its cause, and with laborious care  
Feels with his hand the wood of the violins,  
And bids you mark — O good, bleak,  
honest soul,

So fearful of false hopes!—that all is  
hollow.

He tells you on what tree the wood was  
grown.

He plucks the catgut, tells you whence it  
came,

Gives you the name and pedigree of the  
cat ;

Nay, even affirms a mystery, and will talk  
Of sundry dark vibrations that affect  
The fleshly instrument of the human ear ;  
And so, with a world - excluding  
accuracy—

O, never doubt that every step was true !—  
Melts the great music into less than air  
And misses everything.

Everything ! On one side  
The music soaring endlessly through  
heavens

Within the human soul ; on the other side,  
The unseen Composer of whose tran-  
scendent life

The music speaks in souls made still to  
hear.

He clung to his *vera causa*. In that law  
He saw the way of the Power, but not the  
Power

Determining the way. Did men reject  
The laws of Newton, binding all the worlds,  
Because they still knew nothing of the  
Power

That bound them ? The stone fell. He  
knew not why.

The sun controlled the planets, and the law  
Was constant ; but the mystery of it was  
masked

Under a name ; and no man knew the Power

That gripped the worlds in that unchanging  
bond,

Or whether, in the twinkling of an eye,  
The Power might not release them from  
that bond,

As a hand opens, and the wide universe  
Change in a flash, and vanish like a shadow,  
As prophets had foretold.

He could not think  
That chance decreed the boundless march  
of law

He saw in the starry heavens. Yet he  
could think

Of "chance" on earth; and, while he  
thought, declare

"Chance" was not "chance" but law  
unrecognised;

Then, even while he said it, he would use  
The ambiguous word, base his own law on  
"chance";

And, even while he used it, there would  
move

Before his eyes, in every flake of colour  
Inlaid upon the butterfly's patterned wing,



Legions of atoms wheeling each to its place  
In ever constant law ; and he knew well  
That, even in the living eye that saw them,  
The self-same Power that bound the starry  
worlds

Controlled a myriad atoms, every one  
An ordered system ; and, in every cloud  
Of wind-blown dust and every breaking  
wave

Upon the storm-tossed sea, an infinite host  
Of infinitesimal systems moved by law  
Each to its place ; and, in each growing  
flower,

Myriads of atoms like concentrated suns  
And planets, these to the leaf and those to  
the crown,

Moved in unerring order, and by a law  
That bound all heights and depths of the  
universe,

In an unbroken unity. By what Power ?  
There was one Power, one only known to  
man,

That could determine action. Herschel  
knew it ;

The power whereby the mind uplifts the  
hand  
And lets it fall, the living personal Will.

Ah, but his task, his endless task on earth,  
Bent his head earthward. He must find  
the way

Before he claimed the heights. No Newton  
he ;

Though men began to acclaim him and  
his law

As though they solved all mysteries and  
annulled

All former creeds, and changed the heart of  
heaven.

No Newton he ; not even a Galileo ;

But one who patiently, doggedly laboured  
on,

As Tycho Brahe laboured in old days,

Numbering the stars, recording fact on  
fact,

For those, who, after centuries, might  
discern

The meaning and the cause of what he saw.

Visions of God and heaven were not for  
him,

Unless his "facts" revealed them, as the  
crown

Of his own fight for knowledge.

It might be

The final test of man, the narrow way  
Proving him worthy of immortal life,  
That he should face this darkness and this  
death

Worthily and renounce all easy hope,  
All consolation, all but the wintry smile  
Upon the face of Truth as he discerns it,  
Here upon earth, his only glimmer of  
light,

Leading him onward to an end unknown.  
Faith ! Faith ! O patient, inarticulate  
soul,

If this were faithlessness, there was a Power,  
So whispered Shadow - of - a - Leaf, that  
shared it with him ;

The Power that bowed His glory into  
darkness

To make a world in suffering and in death,

The passionate price that even the Omnipotent  
Must pay for love, and love's undying  
crown.

He hardly heard the whisper ; could not  
hear it  
And keep his own resolve. He bowed his  
head  
In darkness ; and, henceforth, those inward  
gates  
Into the realms of the supernal light  
Began to close.

He knew that they were closing ;  
And yet—was this the dark key to  
Creation ?—

He shared the ecstasy also ; shared that  
sense  
Of triumph ; broke the Bread and drank  
the Wine  
In sacred drops and morsels of the truth ;  
Shared, in renouncement of all else but  
truth,  
A sense that he could never breathe in words

To any one else, a sense that in this age  
It was expedient that a man should lose  
The glory, and die this darker new-found  
death,

To save the people from their rounded  
creeds,

Their faithless faith, and crowns too lightly  
won.

\* \* \* \* \*

O, yet the memory of one midnight hour !  
*Would that she knew. Would God that she  
knew now . . .*

Truer than all his knowledge was that cry ;  
The cry of the blind life struggling through  
the dark,

Upward . . . the blind brow lifted to the  
unseen.

He groped along the dark unending way  
And saw, although he knew not what he  
saw,

Out of the struggle of life, a mightier law  
Emerging ; and, when man could rise no  
higher

By the fierce law of Nature, he beheld  
Nature herself at war against herself.  
He heard, although he knew not what he  
    heard,  
A Voice that, triumphing over her clashing  
    chords,  
Resolved them into an infinite harmony.  
Whose was that Voice ? What Power  
    within the flesh  
Cast off the flesh for a glory in the mind,  
And leapt to victory in self-conquering  
    love ?  
What Voice, whose Power, cast Nature  
    underfoot  
In Bruno, when the flames gnawed at his  
    flesh ;  
In Socrates ; and, in those obscure Christs  
Who daily die ; and, though none other  
    sees,  
Lay hands upon the wheel of the universe  
And master it ; and the sun stands dark  
    at noon ?  
These things he saw but dimly. All his life

He moved along the steep and difficult way  
Of Truth in darkness ; but the Voice of  
Truth

Whispered in darkness, out of the mire and  
clay,

And through the blood-stained agony of the  
world,

“ Fear nothing. Follow Me. I *am* the  
Way.”

So, when Death touched him also, and  
England bore

His dust into her deepening innermost  
shrine,

The Voice he heard long since, and could  
not hear,

Rose like the fuller knowledge, given by  
Death

To one that could best lead him upward  
now,

Rose like a child's voice, opening up the  
heavens,

*I am the Resurrection and the Life.*

## X.—EPILOGUE.

UP the Grand Canyon the full morning  
flowed.

I heard the voices moving through the  
abyss

With the deep sound of pine-woods, league  
on league

Of singing boughs, each separate, each a  
voice,

Yet all one music ;

*The Eternal Mind*

*Enfolds all changes, and can never change.*

*Man is not exiled from this Majesty,*

*The inscrutable Reality, which he shares*

*In his immortal essence. Man that doubts*



*All but the sensuous veils of colour and  
sound,  
The appearances that he can measure and  
weigh,  
Trusts, as the very fashioner of his doubt,  
The imponderable thought that weighs the  
worlds,  
The invisible thought that sees ; thought  
that reveals  
The miracle of the eternal paradox—  
The pure unsearchable Being that cannot be  
Yet Is, and still creates and governs all ;  
A Power that, being Unknowable, is best  
known ;  
For His transcendent Being can reply  
To every agony, “ I am that which waits  
Beyond the last horizon of your pain,  
Beyond your wildest hope, your last despair,  
Above your heaven, and deeper than your  
hell.  
There is not room on earth for what ye  
seek.  
Is there not room in Me ? ”*

*Time is a shadow  
Of man's own thought. Things past and  
things to come  
Are closed in that full circle. He lives and  
reigns ;  
Dies with the dying bird ; and, in its death  
Receives it to His heart. No leaf can fall  
Without Him ; who, for ever pouring out  
His passion into worlds that shall attain  
Love in the highest at last, returns for ever  
Along these roads of suffering and of death,  
With all their lives upgathered to His heart  
Into the heaven of heavens. How else could  
life  
Lay hold on its infinitude, or win  
The strength to walk with Love in complete  
light ?  
For, as a child that learns to walk on earth,  
Life learns these little rhythms of earthly  
law,  
Listens to simple seas that ebb and flow,  
And spells the large bright order of the  
stars*

*Wherein the moving Reason is revealed  
To man's up-struggling mind, or breathed  
like song*

*Into the quiet heart, as love to love.*

*So, step by step, the spirit of man ascends  
Through joy and grief ; and is withdrawn  
by death*

*From the sweet dust that might content it  
here,*

*Into His kingdom, the one central goal*

*Of the universal agony. He lives.*

*He lives and reigns, throned above space and  
time ;*

*And, in that realm, freedom and law are  
one ;*

*Fore-knowledge and all-knowledge and free-  
will,*

*Make everlasting music. .*

*Far away*

*Along the unfathomable abyss it flowed,  
A harmony so consummate that it shared  
The silence of the sky ; a song so deep  
That only the still soul could hear it now :*

*New every morning the creative Word  
Moves upon chaos. Yea, our God grows  
young.*

*Here, now, the eternal miracle is renewed.  
Now, and for ever, God makes heaven and  
earth.*

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